



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

July 15, 2008

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES:
REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT A LOS ANGELES COUNTY SELF-ASSESSMENT
REPORT TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS AFFECTED) (3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

The purpose of the request is to approve and delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Chief Probation Officer (Probation) to submit the Los Angeles County Self-Assessment (CSA) report (Attachment) to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) in order to comply with California's Outcomes and Accountability System (COAS) that monitors the quality of services provided on behalf of foster and Probation youth and their families, and ensures a continual process of improvement in programs, operations, and service delivery.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Find the Los Angeles County CSA report suitable for submission to the CDSS; and
2. Approve and delegate authority to the Director of DCFS and the Chief Probation Officer to submit the CSA report to CDSS.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The purpose of the recommended action is to obtain approval to submit the Los Angeles County CSA report to CDSS. The CSA report is one of the principle components of COAS, which is used to monitor and assess the quality of services provided by both DCFS and Probation. The CSA report provides an analysis of local program operations and systemic factors that impact the delivery of services to children and families. The CSA report encompasses analysis of data pertaining to demographic profile and outcomes data, qualitative data received from stakeholder interviews and case reviews, as well as issues related to systemic factors (e.g., information

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management systems, staff/provider training, case review system, recruitment and retention of resource families) that impact service delivery and operations within both Departments.

The CSA report focuses on service delivery outcomes and provides the opportunity for Los Angeles County to evaluate how local program operations and systemic factors affect measured outcomes and indicators. The CSA report helps to guide the development of the County's System Improvement Plan (SIP), which is the operational agreement between the County and the State that establishes program priorities, defines specific action steps to achieve improvement, and establishes specific improvement goals in performance the County will achieve within the three-year term of the plan.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

None.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Assembly Bill 636 (Steinberg), Chapter 678, Statutes of 2001, enacted the Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability Act of 2001. This law required CDSS to establish COAS. The COAS commenced in January 2004, with implementation instructions provided to local child welfare services and Probation agencies through issuance of ACL 04-05. The COAS operates on a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement, and public reporting of program outcomes. COAS is comprised of County child welfare system reviews and maximizes compliance with federal regulations for the receipt of federal Title IV-E and Title IV-B funds. Principle components of the COAS include: (1) Outcome and Accountability County Data Reports, which are provided on a quarterly basis by University of California Berkeley's Center for Social Services Research Center; (2) County Peer Quality Case Reviews (the last was completed in March, 2007); (3) County Self-Assessment (which is the current attached report); (4) County System Improvement Plan (which will be completed by the end of July, 2008); and (5) State Technical Assistance and Monitoring.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

The CSA report will guide the development of the County's SIP, which defines specific action steps to achieve programmatic, operational, and process improvements that will ultimately provide improved quality, accessibility, and availability of services for children and families.

CONCLUSION

In order to move forward with the steps necessary to comply with California's COAS, the attached Los Angeles CSA report requires Board approval before its submission to the CDSS.

The CSA report is just one of the five principle components involved in the COAS, and it is necessary to continue Los Angeles County's effort towards providing information that assists stakeholders, community partners, and departmental staff assess and monitor the quality of

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
July 15, 2008
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services provided on behalf of foster and Probation youth, as well as evaluate how local program operations and systemic factors affect measured outcomes and indicators.

DCFS, Probation, and our wide array of stakeholders are committed to work collaboratively in an effort to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being for the children of Los Angeles County that are at risk, or are currently residing in out-of-home care through the continued implementation of COAS.

It is requested that the Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors send one copy of the adopted Board action to each of the following:

Department of Children and Family Services
Office of Senior Deputy
Attn: Susan Kerr
425 Shatto Place, Room 600
Los Angeles, CA 90020

Probation Department
Office of Chief Deputy
Attn: David M. Davies
9150 East Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242

Respectfully submitted,



William T. Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

WTF:SRH:MS
GP:BM:cvb

Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Chief Probation Officer
Department of Children and Family Services

DCFS-Probation Self-Assessment.doc

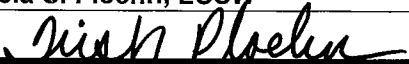
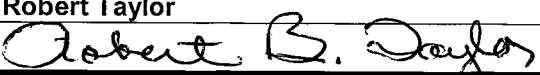
California's Child and Family Services Review County Self-Assessment

County:	Los Angeles
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
Period of Assessment:	2004-2007
Period of Outcomes Data:	2004-2007
Date Submitted:	May , 2008

County Contact Person for County Self-Assessment

Name:	Adela Estrada
Title:	Children's Services Administrator II
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Phone:	(213) 739-6470
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

Submitted by:	County Child Welfare Agency Director (Lead Agency)
Name:	Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW
Signature:	
Submitted by:	County Chief Probation Officer
Name:	Robert Taylor
Signature:	

In Collaboration with:		
County & Community Partners	Name(s)	Signature
County Health Department		
County Mental Health Department		
Parent Representative		
Local Education Agency		
As Applicable:		
California Youth Connection		
CDSS or Other County Adoption Agency		
Local Tribes		

☒ Name and affiliation of other participants are on a separate page

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

The Los Angeles County Probation Department

Los Angeles County Self-Assessment Report



2004-2007

Los Angeles County Self-Assessment Report

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SECTION I



INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Self-Assessment Report: Background, Purpose, and Methodology:

Assembly Bill 636 enacted the Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability Act of 2001, which required the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to establish the California Outcomes and Accountability System (COAS). The purpose of COAS, which was implemented in January, 2004, is to strengthen the accountability system used in California to monitor and assess the quality of services provided to children that have been maltreated. COAS is based upon the principle of ongoing quality improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement, and public reporting of program outcomes.

The Los Angeles County Self-Assessment (CSA) Report is just one of the five components of our county Outcomes and Accountability System. The other components that make up the COAS are the Outcome and Accountability County Data Reports, County Peer Quality Case Reviews (PQCR), County System Improvement Plan, and State Technical Assistance and Monitoring.

The purpose of the CSA Report is for L.A. County to analyze local program operations and systemic factors and to examine its impact on child welfare outcomes from 2004 through 2007. The primary source of data for assessing child welfare outcomes comes from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). However, California Probation Departments do not have access to either CWS/CMS or any other statewide data tracking system. In the absence of this advantage, outcome data is not available for probation youth. This prevents probation departments statewide from obtaining reliable and accurate data to evaluate outcomes and monitor the progress of youth and families in the delinquency system. Since Probation Departments do not have access to CWS/CMS, it is not possible to obtain data on those youth who have crossed over from dependency to delinquency. Therefore, Section III, Child Welfare Outcomes will not have any probation information, except for Measure 8A—Independent Living, since both DCFS and Probation share this resource and data is collected on both populations. Some of those measures will be discussed in Section IV, Systemic Factors.

In addition to using CWS/CMS data to analyze data trends and examine progress made on measured outcomes and indicators, L.A. County also gathered information from a wide variety of stakeholders that participated in the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR),

the CDSS - facilitated Focus Groups, and the L.A. County Self-Assessment Team meetings. Participants were asked how they feel DCFS and Probation are performing in the core areas of safety, permanency, and well-being for children, whether or not they have noticed any changes in performance since the last federal review, and what resource issues or practices in child welfare did they see as affecting performance in the three core areas already mentioned.

Los Angeles County – Where Our Children Live, Grow, and Learn

Los Angeles County is, in terms of population, the largest county in California and the United States. It is very diverse in its geography, racial, ethnicity and socio-economic make up. In addition to its urban core, the County includes vast areas of high desert, valleys, mountains and 76 miles of beaches. Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau give an estimated 2006 population of 9,948,081 residents.

The county is home to 88 incorporated cities and many unincorporated areas, 81 school districts, 1,894 schools, more than 1,400 parks, 235 community libraries, 68 law enforcement agencies and thousands of community-based organizations. As of 2004, the county's population is larger than the individual populations of 42 states considered separately (and on that basis is more populous than the aggregate of the 11 least populous states) and is home to over a quarter of all California residents.

Los Angeles County is home to 1.2 million families and almost 3 million children (0-17 years). Fifty-one percent of households have children less than 18 years of age. These children account for about one third of California's child population. More than half of all children in L.A. County are under 10 years of age; 27% are under 5 years; and 27% were ages 5 to 9 years. Close to 30% were 10 to 14 years, and 16% were between 15 and 17 years old. About 60% are Latino children, almost 10% are African-American, about 10% are Asian/Pacific Islander, and less than 1% are American Indian. The remaining 20% are non-Hispanic White children. In 2007, 59% of children were speaking a language other than English at home.

Employment, Income and Poverty in Los Angeles County:

The per capita family income in L.A. County is \$24,705 and the median household income increased from \$42,045 in 2000 to \$48,248 in 2005 (childrennow.org). Eighty-eight percent of households have at least one working parent, 23% of the children are living in poverty, and 11% of households are receiving food stamps (childrennow.org). The unemployment rate in 2004 was 6.6%, reduced to 5.2% in September, 2007, and then increased to 6% in January, 2008.

Children Living in Poverty						
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Los Angeles, CA (county)	23%	22%	25%	26%	24%	23%

Median Household Income						
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Los Angeles, CA (county)	\$42,045	\$41,573	\$41,506	\$41,544	\$43,518	\$48,248

Housing in Los Angeles County:

The Fair Market Rent in L.A is \$1,269 and housing costs are 30% of the household income. Thirteen percent of L.A.'s residents live in overcrowded households (childrennow.org). The 2005 median house value was \$480,300.

Education:

Seventy percent of people 25 years of age and older have obtained a high school diploma or higher and 24.9% obtained a bachelor's degree or higher (City-Data.com).

Forty-two percent of 3 to 4 year olds are enrolled in preschool or nursery school. Thirty-one percent of students enrolled in public K-12 schools are English learners. Only 39% of 2nd to 6th graders are proficient or advanced in English Language Arts, and only 49% are proficient or advanced in Math. Only 35% of 7th to 11th graders are proficient or advanced in English Language Arts and 24% are proficient or advanced in math. Seventy-three percent of 10th graders passed the California High School English Exit Exam and 70% passed the California High School Math Exit Exam. Forty percent of high school students were able to meet the UC/CSU entrance requirements.

There are wide disparities in academic achievement among African-American, Asian, Latino, and White children. For example, 29% of Latino children and 31% of African-American children are proficient or advanced in English Language Arts while 69% of Asian children and 66% of White children are proficient or advanced in that same area. For math, 35% of African-American children and 42% of Latino children are considered proficient or advanced, while 80% of Asian children and 71% of white children are considered proficient or advanced in math.

English Learning students' academic performance was much lower in English and Math, especially for those older students who were in the 7th to 11th grades.

For children who were economically disadvantaged, 29% and 41% were proficient or advanced in English and Math, respectively. For those children who were *not* economically disadvantaged, 62% and 68% were proficient or advanced in English and Math, respectively.

Health:

In 2005, 39 per 1,000 teens, ages 15-19, gave birth – a huge difference from 1998, when the rate was 60 per 1,000 young women giving birth. However, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Reproductive Statistics Branch reports that in 2007, the birth rate for U.S. teenagers has risen by 3%.

Teen Births (Rate Per 1,000 Females Ages 15-19)								
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Los Angeles, CA (<i>county</i>)	60	56	50	47	44	41	41	39

Ninety-one percent of Los Angeles' children are in good or excellent health, 14% have been diagnosed with asthma, and 93% are covered by health insurance. However, only 24% of children are considered to be physically fit and 36% are overweight.

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services: Providing Safety, Permanency and Well-Being for Children

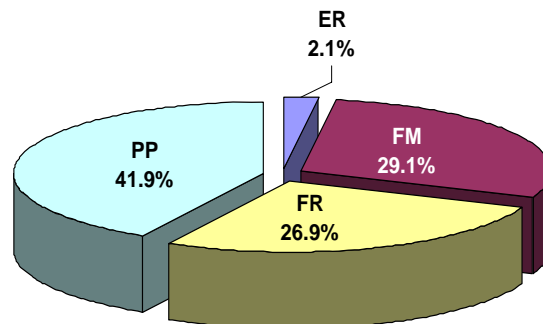
The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services' mission is to provide, in partnership with the community, a comprehensive child protection system of child abuse prevention, family preservation, and permanency for children. DCFS works to ensure that children grow up safe, that they are physically and emotionally healthy, educated, and living in a permanent home.

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), working from a 1.6 billion dollar budget, is the largest child welfare system in the nation. L.A. County DCFS has a workforce of 7,000 employees, including 2,300 Children's Social Workers and 417 Supervising Children's Social Workers providing services to 36,663 children and their families (according to CWS/CMS data as of December 31, 2007).

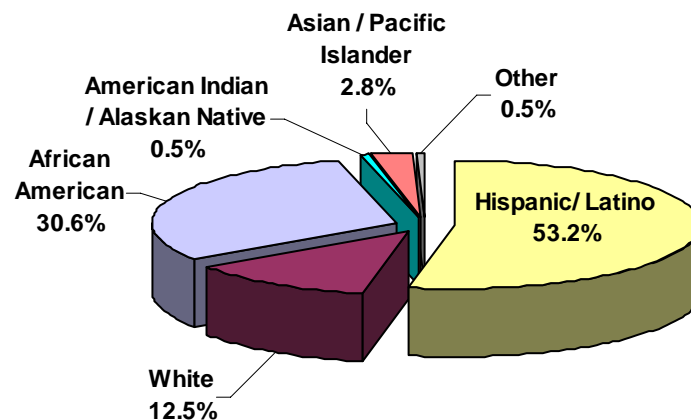
As of December, 2007, there were 10,657 children receiving Family Maintenance Services, 9,858 receiving Family Reunification Services, 15,347 children and youth receiving Permanent Placement services and 771 receiving Emergency Response services. Fifty-three percent of the children we serve are Hispanic/Latino and 30.6%

are African-American. Over half (60.6%) of the children receiving child protective services are between the ages of 0-2 yrs. (17.7%), 5-9 yrs. (23.3%), and 10-13 yrs. (19.6%). DCFS receives an average of 167,000 referrals per year, with an average of 27,500 substantiated cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

DCFS Caseload by Service Component:



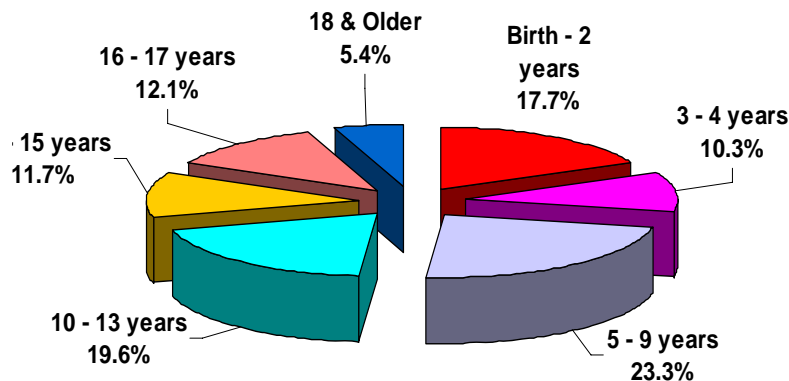
DCFS Caseload by Ethnicity:



DATA SOURCES AND NOTES

1. The chart is based on service component of active cases as of December 31, 2007
2. Data source is CWS/CMS History as of December 31, 2007

DCFS Caseload by Age:



DATA SOURCES AND NOTES

1. The chart is based on service component of active cases as of December 31, 2007
2. Data source is CWS/CMS History as of December 31, 2007

DCFS has 18 offices throughout Los Angeles County that are located in one of the eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs).

The following provides a brief profile of the family demographics, strengths and needs in each of the SPAs:

- The Antelope Valley (SPA 1) is the smallest in population at 334,951, but the largest geographic area and includes a number of small towns surrounded by high desert. Thirty-six percent of the 106,591 children in SPA 1 are white while 44.8% are Latino, 15.7% are African American, 0.5% are American Indian, and 2.5% are Asian/Pacific Islander. Isolation and limited public transportation present major difficulties. There are parents commuting more than two hours a day, leaving many children alone for many hours at a time. SPA 1 accounts for 4% of births to teen mothers, 6% of youth felony arrests, and 7.8% of the children DCFS placed in out-of-home care in 2007.
- The San Fernando Valley (SPA 2) has a population of 2.1 million residents. SPA 2 is about the size of Nevada and New Mexico and is larger than 14 other states. The majority of SPA 2's 559,959 children and youth are Latino (52.1%),

while 3.5% are African American, 35.8% are white, 8.4% are Asian and 0.2% are American Indian. In 2004, SPA 2 accounted for 13% of the County's births to teen mothers, 16% of youth felony arrests and 11.2% of children in out-of-home care.

- The San Gabriel Valley (SPA 3) is home to 1.8 million people (slightly greater than the population of Nebraska) including 486,130 children and youth. 59.5% are Latino, while 18.8% are Asian/Pacific Islander, 16.9% are White, 0.2% are American Indian, and 4.6% are African American. Sixteen percent of youth live in families with incomes below the poverty level. In 2004, SPA 3 accounted for 16% of births to teen mothers, 17% of youth felony arrests and 17.7% of children in out-of-home care.

- The Metro area (SPA 4) includes a population of 1.2 million people including 296,543 children and youth. SPA 4 includes the area in and around the downtown of the City of Los Angeles and is home to a large number of immigrant families. Seventy-two percent the children in this area are Latino, 4.1% are African American, 12.3% are Asian/Pacific Islander, 11.3% are White, and 0.2% are American Indian. Thirty percent of youth live in poverty, and SPA 4 accounted for 12% of births to teen mothers, 11% of youth felony arrests, and 6.6% of children in out of home care.

- The West area (SPA 5) has a population of 646,770 and includes most of the wealthiest parts of the county. Fifty-five percent of the 115,6100 children are White, while 27% are Latino, 9.5% are Asian/Pacific Islander, 8% are African American, and 0.2% are American Indian. SPA 5 accounted for only about 1% of births to teen mothers, 5% of youth felony arrests, and 1.8% of children in out-of-home care in 2007.

- The South area (SPA 6) has one million people, but almost 36% (386,125) are children, and the economic challenges for families are overwhelming. Thirty nine percent of children live in families with incomes under the poverty level and 78.7% live in families with incomes under 200% of poverty level. Over 70% are Latino, 26.1% are African American, 0.7% are Asian Pacific Islander and American Indian, and 1.1% are White. In 2004, SPA 6 accounted for 24% of births to teen mothers, 14% of youth felony arrests, and 23% of children placed in out-of-home care.

- The East area (SPA 7) has a population of almost 1.4 million. Eighty-four percent of the 404,446 children are Latino, while 8.6% are White, 5.0% are Asian Pacific Islander, 2.2% are African American, and 0.2% are American Indian. SPA 7 accounted for 16% birth to teen mothers, 13% of youth felony arrests, and 13.5% of children in out-of-home care.

- Lastly, the South Bay/Harbor area (SPA 8), with a total population of 1.6 million, includes beach communities along the ocean, as well as Long Beach, the Harbor area and economically depressed areas inland. SPA 8 is one of the more racially and culturally balanced areas in the county. Fifty percent of SPA 8's 453,723 children are Latino, 22.2% are White, 12.6% are Asian and Pacific Islander, 14.6% are African American, and 0.3% are American Indian. SPA 8 accounted for 13% of births to teen mothers, 18% of youth felony arrests, and 13.4% of children in out-of-home care.

One can appreciate the complexity and the diversity of the communities that DCFS serves and the implications that this has for the design of programs and initiatives that are implemented in order to meet the variety of needs that our children and families have. While there is great diversity amongst the clients that we serve, the innovative practices and programs that are provided by DCFS are based on common values: Teamwork; community involvement; family engagement; shared responsibility among family, community, caregivers, and staff; open and honest communication; respect for families, children, and their needs, as well as diligence in working towards the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

Over the past four years, DCFS has focused on implementing and expanding five major initiatives in order to better serve children and families: 1) Point of Engagement; 2) Team Decision Making, 3) Structured Decision Making, 4) Concurrent Planning, and 5) The Permanency Partners Program. These practices, along with other key programs, are described in Section II.

The Los Angeles County Probation Department: Rebuilding Lives and Promoting Healthier and Safer Communities by Providing Safety, Permanency and Well-Being for Foster Youth

As a criminal justice agency, the Los Angeles County Probation Department is the largest probation department in the world. Currently funded by a net appropriation of approximately 630 million dollars, the Department provides an extensive range of services through the efforts of over 5,800 employees deployed in more than 50 locations throughout the county. These employees supervise and provide services to probation youth in Detention Services, e.g. Juvenile Hall, Residential Treatment Services, e.g. Camps, Juvenile Field and Special Services, e.g. Community-Based Supervision, Intensive Gang Supervision, Dual Status Supervision and Camp Community Transition and Placement Services, e.g. Group Homes and Relative/Non-Relative Homes. These services are provided to rebuild lives, provide for healthier and safer communities and affect positive change.

As of March 2008, there are 70 Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) and 7 Supervising Probation Officers (SDPOs) currently providing services to approximately 1500-1800 probation foster youth who are placed in out-of-home care. There are approximately 425 DPOs (and over 40 SDPOs) that provide supervision and services to probation youth who reside in the community and are at imminent risk of being placed in the foster care system. According to LA County Probation data gathered from the Juvenile Case Management System and Title IV-E Time Studies, approximately three-fourths of the total population of probation youth in the community is determined to be at imminent risk. This determination is based on several factors including the Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) score and recent out of home placement. These families are receiving family maintenance services in order to reduce the occurrence and reoccurrence of maltreatment, as well as the escalation of delinquency. The Probation Department also has a Group Home Monitoring Unit that receives an average of 280 referrals per year regarding out-of-home abuse/neglect in group homes, and an average of 15 of those referrals is substantiated.

The Probation Department has 18 offices throughout Los Angeles County that are also located in the various SPAs. There are 7 offices that include Placement Units that specifically service probation foster youth: East Los Angeles (SPA 7), Centinela (SPA 6), Crenshaw (SPA 6), San Gabriel Valley (SPA 3), South Central (SPA 6) and Van Nuys (SPA 2) and Van Nuys On-Site (services multiple SPAs). There are 10 DPOs assigned to the Van Nuys On-Site Unit. The On-Site Program is a special supervision strategy that involves DPOs being housed on the grounds of a group-home. The On-Site DPO works exclusively with youth placed in that group home and is available daily to provide intensive supervision and is part of the treatment team.

SECTION II



KEY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS

Los Angeles County's Key Child Welfare Reform Initiatives and Programs:

Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project

Los Angeles County is participating in the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project (CAP) and is one of the Eleven Cohort I County Project sites, testing innovative practice and approaches to child welfare. On July 1, 2007, DCFS and Probation began implementing the Title IV-E Waiver, which allow the Departments flexibility to re-invest IV-E funds to provide direct services based on each family's individual needs so that children can remain safely with their families, can be reunified sooner, or an alternative permanency plan can be achieved in a timely manner.

Since the implementation of the CAP on July 1, 2007, the out-of-home caseload for DCFS has decreased by 4.8% (from 23,561 to 22,422) and the total AFDC-FC caseload has decreased by 5.9% (from 18,304 to 17,230) through November 30, 2007.

Both DCFS and Probation have established Title IV-E Waiver Teams led by Waiver Coordinators in order to develop, plan, and track project activities as well as address any barriers or challenges related to the project.

DCFS has identified three programs that will be initially implemented in order to improve outcomes for children and families: 1) Expansion of Team Decision Making Meetings; 2) Focused Family Finding and Engagement through Pilot Specialized Permanency Units in three regional offices, and 3) Up-front Assessments on high risk cases for domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues. DCFS has not yet provided direct services to children and families under the expansion of TDM and Permanency Units; however, extensive planning and efforts are in action so as to serve the target populations of children in group homes, children in foster care for two years or longer with no identified permanency resource, and high need youth with no identified permanency resource.

The Probation Department has identified two first sequence implementation priorities in order to improve outcomes for children and families: 1) Enhanced Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning and 2) Expansion of Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT). Eight additional efforts, such as Restructure of Placement Services and Utilization of Aftercare Support Services, have also been

identified in Probation's overall five-year plan and will be discussed in detail at the end of this section.

DCFS Initiatives

Point of Engagement (POE):

POE is a DCFS service delivery system that is characterized by a seamless and timely transfer of responsibility from front end investigations to actual service delivery in order to provide more thorough investigations and needed services to children and families within their homes and communities. This system utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach that includes the family, avoiding, if possible, the removal of children from their homes.

Point of Engagement is a collaborative public and private initiative that provides a community safety net for our children and families. POE was designed to provide a faster response for the provision of services and, through the use of teams, an emphasis on shared decision-making, comprehensive case evaluations and investigations. POE utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach that includes the family in the process of selecting and planning for the delivery of needed services. POE engages various resources within the Department, other county departments, as well as community-based and faith-based organizations in order to address the various needs of children and families.

Key Elements of POE:

- Well-staffed and trained emergency response child abuse investigations units to provide more thorough investigations and Intensive Services Workers to provide timely provision of services.
- Use of other professionals within and outside of the Department to assess medical, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and other issues that place children at risk.
- Utilize a team decision-making approach to eliminate bias, promote cultural sensitivity and to encourage collaboration between social workers, families and the community to develop an appropriate safety and service plan that allows children to remain safely at home and in their own communities.
- Inclusion of families, relatives, and community providers in the decision-making process for the development of the family's service plan and to identify relative resources for respite or temporary placement.
- Timely collaboration and communication among social workers that investigate referrals and those that provide services to ensure a smooth transition from front-end investigations to services.
- Community outreach to identify collaborative community partners.
- Cultivation of change in established ways of thinking and providing services among all levels of staff from administration to clerical.
- Provide a seamless delivery of services for our children and families.

Key Components of POE:

- Differential (Community) response: provision of a community-based network of formal and informal support services for children and families with an inconclusive child abuse and neglect referral to divert families from entering the child protective system.
- Alternative Response: provision of a community-based network of formal and informal support and services for children and families with multiple inconclusive child abuse and neglect referrals to divert families from entering the child protective system.
- Voluntary Services: provision of voluntary family maintenance/reunification and family preservation services to families that have been assessed to be at moderate to high risk where a child protective case is opened.
- Intensive Services Workers: conduct child safety conferences shortly after detention to review for possible return of children and to connect children and families to services immediately following detention.
- Team-Decision-making/Child Safety Conferences: provides a forum for the family, relatives, friends, social workers and community service providers to share information, observations, concerns and identify family strengths and resources to assist in the development of an appropriate service plan for the family.

In December of 2006, The Children and Families Research Consortium submitted a report to DCFS that provided findings of a qualitative study on Point of Engagement as it was implemented in the Compton and Wateridge offices. In summary, they found that Team Decision Making was viewed as a positive and productive practice that is consistent with the principles of POE. Many benefits of TDM were described by various stakeholders, including the ability to better engage families in the decision making process and being able to include family supports and community representatives in the development of a safety plan. Stakeholders noted that the “process helps build cooperation from families” and “TDMs in which supervisors are present have a built-in screening process that helps to more appropriately recommend a program to a family.”

The Emergency Response staff reported that their roles have significantly changed as a result of POE, stating that they have much greater contact with community-based agencies through referral, assessment and follow-up and have greater responsibility with immediately securing services that help mitigate safety and risk factors in order to reduce reliance on out-of-home care. The expectation is to work more collaboratively with agencies, families, and internal DCFS staff.

The qualitative study also noted some challenges with the implementation of TDM, including difficulty with training enough skilled facilitators who are available when needed, and the regular, systematic use of TDMs. Finding the space to hold TDMs was also an issue and affected the timeliness in which TDMs were completed. The primary

factor reported by study participants as hindering POE implementation in both of the offices was understaffing, especially in light of the increased work with families that POE requires. There were also problems associated with employee turnover in both offices. Finally, while the Compton office staff felt that there were sufficient community resources and services available, the Wateridge office staff reported a significant difficulty in the availability of community agency staff to partner on assessment and treatment of POE cases. This difference was due to Compton's partnership with Shields for Families, a community-based agency that continues to lead the network of community-based organizations and faith groups in providing POE services. Shields for Families was so committed to POE that they set up their infrastructure, appointed the staff, provided the training, and created the internal resources that were needed in order to be the ideal POE partner. Through the new Prevention Initiative (see Section V), all DCFS offices stand to benefit from similar approaches. Shields for Families will lead a community-based prevention network designed to serve all three DCFS offices in SPA 6.

To determine the impact of POE county-wide, a cohort data analysis was conducted, comparing the baseline period of FY 2002-2003 to FY 2005-2006. Since the implementation of POE in 2004, removals and detentions have increased by 22.6% and 29.3%, respectively. However, there has been a dramatic increase (66.4%) in the number of children reunified as well as a 14.8% reduction in repeated child maltreatment and a 1.7% reduction in re-entry rates. Further, there is increased placement stability for children in foster care, with a 5.7% increase of children experiencing 2 or less placements within a 12 month period. The data sources used to conduct this analysis were CWS/CMS Datamart reports dated 1/29/07 and 3/17/08, provided by the Department's Bureau of Information Services.

Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT):

The Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) is an exciting collaborative effort between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and other community providers. It is designed to ensure the immediate and comprehensive assessment of children and youth entering out-of-home placement. The value of children and families having a multidisciplinary assessment is that there is a comprehensive understanding of the complicated issues that families' face when they enter the foster care system. Therefore, social workers can more effectively plan with the family and practitioners to address specific needs, treatment, and services. Cases that are assessed early on, with concrete interventions, will move through the system faster, therefore reducing the time to achieve permanency. Further, early assessment of appropriate placement options decreases the number of placement disruptions, and increases the level of safety while in out of home care. Finally, thorough assessment of family needs, with the appropriate linkage to needed services,

treatment, follow-up, and support will decrease the likelihood that the family will return to the child welfare system.

MAT was initially implemented in April, 2004 as a pilot program in two offices. Currently, MAT is implemented in SPAs 3 and 6, which encompass 8 offices (refer to the chart below). Plans are underway to expand MAT to SPAs 1 and 7 by May, 2008.

Family to Family Initiative:

The Family to Family Initiative's strategies of Team Decision Making, community capacity building, and recruiting, developing and supporting resource families is implemented countywide; however, there are 7 regional offices that are considered to be the "anchor sites" for the Family to Family Initiative, which means that these 7 offices have staff that have been assigned to help the regional office deepen the work and strengthen the implementation of the strategies. The DCFS anchor site offices for the Family to Family Initiative are: Lakewood, Torrance (both offices are located in SPA 8), Metro North (SPA 4), Pomona (SPA 3), Santa Clarita/West San Fernando Valley (SPA 2), Lancaster and Palmdale (SPA 1). The four core strategies of the Family to Family Initiative are: 1) Team Decision Making, 2) Building Community Partnerships, 3) Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families, and 4) Self-Evaluation. Other areas of development within the Family to Family Initiative include the Parents in Partnership program, which is implemented in four regional offices (Lakewood, Pomona, Lancaster, Palmdale, and Belvedere) and work in the areas of disproportionality and disparity is being done in the Pomona office. Below is a description of the progress being made in each of the Family to Family Initiative's strategies for improving outcomes for children and families.

Family to Family Initiative: Team Decision Making:

Los Angeles County has over 70 full-time TDM Facilitators. Technical Assistants from the Annie E. Casey Foundation provided the initial training for the Facilitators and recently sponsored a "Tune-Up" training session for every TDM Facilitator. The training was well received and supports model fidelity efforts. And, each month, a TDM representative from each office is expected to attend the TDM Roundtable Meeting, which is an open forum that provides an opportunity for Family to Family staff to address TDM program policy, updates, and practice issues.

Full implementation of TDMs for removals is operational in the anchor sites, and replacement and reunification TDMs are being scheduled in some offices, despite that fact that they are not mandated.

There has been a dramatic increase of the use of TDMs in L.A. County, going from the completion of 3,106 TDMs in 2005 to the completion of 12,276 TDMs in 2007

(Appendix I shows a detailed TDM Outcome Summary Chart for 2004-2007). It is county policy that all removals or potential removals shall result in having a TDM meeting in order to engage the parents, family, and community in the development of a safety plan.

TDM workgroups in the anchor sites are meeting monthly to address any logistics and technical issues (TDM tracking system), to ensure that all removals have a TDM. Some offices report the need for more involvement in the TDMs by community partners and representatives, while other offices indicate high participation by community partners.

TDMs have encouraged greater collaboration among DCFS, families and the community and the involved community partners, each making special effort to develop creative ideas that will benefit families.

Stakeholders report that Team Decision Making has overall been the most noticeable operational change within DCFS that has been seen in years, and that TDMs are valued because they involve the family and community in placement related decisions. However, stakeholders report that the quality and skill of the Facilitator is very important, and that some Facilitators need additional training. In addition, stakeholders reported that these meetings need to be more inclusive; more involvement of key people needs to be encouraged and more need to be invited in order to increase the effectiveness and quality of the TDM meeting. Overall, the practice of TDM was viewed positively.

Family to Family Initiative: Recruitment, Development and Support (RDS) of Resource Families:

Based on the specific needs of various anchor site communities, major RDS activities included the following: Monthly RDS meetings with community partners that focused on support and trainings for resource families/kinship caregivers; support venues that involved luncheons; events that provided opportunities to meet community members, such as “Family Fun Day”; a Resource Family Support Network for caregivers to receive current and relevant information about updated community resources; trainings, which included, but were not limited to, topics such as bullying, psychotropic medications, and child abuse reporting for non-mandated reporters, and the development of mentoring programs. In addition, surveys were sent to caregivers asking about their specific needs regarding additional trainings on caregiver issues.

In 2007, faith-based organizations (churches, synagogues, mosques, other denominations, etc.) increased their involvement in the RDS goals, whereby faith based leaders co-chaired RDS monthly meetings, introduced new community partners, and shared their resources with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Local schools, community colleges, and universities have also assisted DCFS in its recruitment, development, and support efforts of resource families in a variety of ways. Most are displaying and distributing recruitment brochures at their campuses; MSW graduate student interns are actively participating in various levels of the development and planning of RDS events (i.e. “Celebrating and Encouraging Sibling Connections”, Pasadena office), and assisting with the development and distribution of a Resource Family Exit Survey for resource families who have chosen to no longer foster. Some of the anchor sites report discussion on how to best utilize former foster youth in RDS issues.

Most anchor sites have initiated steps to clean and purify their database on the actual number of active resource families in their communities. Resource families have been surveyed as to their current ability to accept placements, which has allowed for the updating of the number of actual available placement beds. Further, some of the anchor sites have created an emergency placement database to help make better placement matches.

Structured Decision Making (SDM):

Structured Decision Making provides social workers with simple, objective, and reliable tools with which to make the best possible decisions for individual cases and provides managers with information for improved planning and resource allocation. The implementation of SDM tools ensures that safety, risk, and needs are assessed for each child for whom child welfare services are to be provided, including gathering and evaluating information relevant to the case situation and appraising case services needs. Generally, the SDM utilization rates have been increasing since 2004:

Percent of SDM Tool Completion				
	2004	2005	2006	2007
SDM Hotline Assessment Tool (this tool was implemented on 07/01/05)	n/a	97.8% n =26,564	99.6% n = 73,763	98.5% n = 68,213
Safety Assessment	85.5% n = 55,614	90.3% n=58,831	90.8% n = 58,592	92.8% n = 64,271
Risk Assessment	77.1% n = 29,674	81.4% n = 26,824	84.6% n = 23,251	83.5% n = 23,396

Initial FSNA	37.1% n = 5,516	63.9% n = 15,124	51% 15,721	78% n = 15,001
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The Permanency Partners Program (P3):

In Los Angeles County, there are over 9,000 children who are currently residing in long-term foster care placements that are not categorized as “legally permanent.” In an effort to assist DCFS case-carrying Children’s Social Workers (CSWs) find legally permanent homes and adult connections for older youth age 12-18, the Department has implemented the Permanency Partners Program (P3). Since October 2004, P3 has worked to pair a Permanency Partner (a specially trained part-time CSW) with a youth, in order to identify one or more adult connections with the primary goal of reunifying the youth with family. If reunification is not feasible then legal permanent plans of adoptions and legal guardianship are explored. At minimum, P3 strives to provide all youth with an adult connection and/or mentor.

The process begins with the Permanency Partner and youth meeting, talking and spending a substantial amount of time together in order to establish a trusting relationship and to discuss the youth’s desires in terms of permanency. They then work toward the identification of important people in the youth’s life, whether that is someone they are currently in contact with, or someone from the youth’s past. All during the process, the P3 staff will be “mining” the case record – thoroughly scouring the case cover to cover – in order to identify any possible adults that might be able to become a resource for this youth. In addition, the P3 staff will initiate an intensive search for adult relatives or other possible connection resources. If a resource is identified, they are contacted and informed of the situation. If the adult and youth are amenable, the P3 staff, working in conjunction with the social worker, youth and the potential resource, will foster the relationship and explore which permanency option will be pursued (reunification, adoption, legal guardianship or mentor). The P3 staff will continue follow-up with the case by identifying and working with the CSW to arrange for services that will aid the youth in making and maintaining these connections. The P3 staff will also provide support to the CSW to help move the case through DCFS’ internal processes to solidify the connection. In addition, P3 staff utilizes the resources from our other initiatives by making referrals to and/or participating in our other programs including Team Decision Making (TDM), Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), Family Preservation, and Kinship/ASFA. In the future, the goal is to incorporate P3 activities into standard casework as a part of the concurrent planning process.

P3 services are being provided at each of the DCFS offices, with one or more staff assigned to each office. Currently, there are 74 P3 CSWs and 12 P3 SCSWs, working part-time, with most being DCFS retirees (not to exceed 120 days per year). While P3 services are available for all regional offices, L.A. County plans to further expand resources for P3 due to its success in achieving permanency for youth.

Each office has created a process to refer youth that are 12-18 years old and in long term foster care to their P3 staff. Once the P3 section receives the referral, it is screened for suitability and, if accepted, assigned to a P3 worker.

As of September 2007, P3 has provided P3 services to 2099 youth. Approximately, 39% (832) of the youth now have a legally permanent plan identified or established. A total of 57 youth have returned home to a parent and had their child welfare case closed, 25 youth have returned home and continue to have their case supervised by DCFS and 157 are moving towards reunification with a parent. In addition, 10 youth have been adopted, 5 youth are in adoptive placements and 242 youth who were previously opposed to adoption are now involved in adoption planning. Finally, 25 youth have had a legal guardian appointed and their cases closed through KinGAP, 84 youth are in a legal guardianship and continue to have their case supervised by DCFS and 227 youth have a plan of legal guardianship identified and are moving through the court process.

Concurrent Planning Redesign:

Concurrent Planning Redesign has been developed as a joint Labor-Management initiative to address the goal of returning children that have entered foster care into safe, stable, and lifelong homes. In working towards this goal, the Concurrent Planning Redesign Pilot Phase I and Phase II have been implemented in order to serve all children in out-of-home care. The concept of concurrent planning involves setting up an alternative permanent plan, while at the same time providing Family Reunification Services for a detained child. Simultaneously preparing for an alternative permanent plan while working with a family toward Family Reunification does not mean that DCFS is not committed to assisting the family to strengthen itself; it means that DCFS is committed to providing timely permanence for children. Planning for permanence ensures that all reasonable efforts to safely maintain the child at home, or safely reunify the child with his or her family will be made. It also means that if the child cannot be maintained in or returned to the family of origin, another permanent family is prepared to meet the child's need for permanence in a timely manner.

Los Angeles County DCFS Concurrent Planning Redesign initiative began the spring of 2004 at the first of many labor/management collaborative meetings. The collaborative meetings resulted in the implementation of systemic changes which are now known as

Concurrent Planning Redesign (CPR). The coordinated roll out of CPR in each DCFS office began with the Lakewood office in March 2005. The roll out has continued to July 2007 when the last of 18 DCFS offices completed the training and implementation of CPR.

The roll-out of Concurrent Planning Redesign includes systematic work-shift changes in the form of:

- Use of new family background information gathering strategies
- Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) for adoption cases becomes a team responsibility with the Dependency Investigator coordinating the team.
- Permanency (Adoption) staff is assigned the case earlier and assume full responsibility for all adoption-related activities.
- Family Maintenance and Reunification social worker remains the primary case manager through adoption finalization and termination of jurisdiction, thus maintaining a consistent CSW for the child and stopping a case transfer that can delay permanency.
- Integration of CPR with other offices strategies, Points of Engagement (POE), Team Decision Making (TDM), Permanency Partners Program (P3), Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) and Family Finding.
- Full Disclosure with children, birth parents, caregiver and others involved in the child's life by all Children Social Workers throughout the life of the case.
- Monthly office-based Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) meetings which facilitate teamwork, office review and action items related to the CPR process.
- Participation in central monthly Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) meetings which facilitate CPR evaluation, review and action items by representatives from the offices. Representatives are staff from all levels and from a variety of programs.

A team of five CPR technical support staff are instrumental in assisting office staff in the coordination and understanding of Concurrent Planning Redesign and establishing and maintaining efficient systems and consistency among offices. The Department CIP meetings, the office CQI meetings and ongoing workgroups and projects maintain and enhance the efficiency and quality of the CPR process.

The Wraparound Program:

Under the auspices of Senate Bill 163, the County of Los Angeles has provided Wraparound services to both DCFS and Probation families and their children/youth with multiple, complex and enduring needs since 1998. Wraparound is an integrated, multi-agency, community-based process grounded in a philosophy of unconditional commitment to support families to safely and competently care for their children. The single most important outcome of the Wraparound approach is a child thriving in a permanent home and maintained by normal community services and supports.

The Los Angeles County Wraparound model has been developed through a collaborative partnership between the County and the Lead Wraparound Agencies (LWAs). This partnership, through regular meetings and solicitation of community and family input, maintains high standards, measures the achievement of outcomes and ensures voice, choice and access for all stakeholders.

State and federal eligibility criteria for Wraparound require that the child be placed in, or at risk of placement in, a Rate Classification Level (RCL) 12-14 group home. Enrollment in Wraparound is completed through a network of Interagency Screening Committees (ISC) located in each of Los Angeles County's eight Service Planning Areas (SPA). The ISC's conduct "consultations", defined as brief and focused case discussions utilized to make an enrollment decision regarding the case and the services recommended. For enrolled children and families, Wraparound services are provided on a no eject, no reject basis. As the needs of the child and family change, the Wraparound Plan of Care is changed to meet these needs and to achieve identified outcomes.

The number of youth enrolled in the Wraparound program has increase from 739 in 2004 to 1,513 in 2007. The largest referral source for wraparound services remains the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Other referral sources include Probation and Department of Mental Health. Referrals generated between the three agencies show consistent trend in terms of percentage of referral. Referrals for wraparound services generated by group homes have showed big increase from 2005 to 2007. For example, in 2005 group homes generated 111 referrals followed by 53 referrals in 2006. In 2007, however, group homes generated 153 referrals. The average length of stay of wraparound graduates shows continued trend of decline in the average length of stay. As of 2007, the average length of stay of wraparound graduates is 11.75 months.

Although DCFS remains the largest source for Wraparound services, Probation referrals have increased from 18% in 2006 to 23% of the referrals in 2008. There are 15 Interagency Screening Committee Teams and only 6 Probation Officers to cover the teams. Not only do they act as the liaison between the teams and the Probation Department, but they also monitor the case for the duration of the program. They are currently handling approximately 1,122 case reviews for youth and their families, which is up from 513 in 2005.

Wraparound service outcomes in the areas of permanency, safety, and well-being were positive, as each measure surpassed the target goal. Please refer to **Appendix II** for a detailed outcome summary for Wraparound measures.

In a DCFS research study conducted in 2005, 52 children who graduated from Wraparound were compared to 52 children who were randomly selected from a pool of DCFS youth that ended in RCL 12 or above in 2004. Results of the comparison indicate that the children who graduated from Wraparound were 36 times less likely to have another placement episode than those in the RCL 12 or above.

Comparison of the total cost for the 7 placements after graduation from Wrap vs. the 249 placements after placement in RCL 12 and above facility indicates that the 7 placements from Wrap had a total of 977 total days of placement post graduation while the 249 total placements for the Non-Wrap group led to 38,110 total days of placement in a higher level of care. According to DCFS' Budget Section who completed this study, the 977 days of placement ended up costing \$56,000 while the 38,110 day of placements resulted in a group cost of almost \$3.5 million.

Family Preservation Program:

DCFS contracts with 41 contractors to provide Family Preservation Services. Some contractors have multiple contracts, which results in a total of 66 service sites located throughout L.A. County. Family Preservation agencies are contracted to provide a multitude of services that are geared towards maintaining the child in his or her own, or assisting the family towards a safe reunification. During FY 06-07, 5,432 (64%) of Family Preservation Services were provided to Family Maintenance cases and 3,108 (36%) were provided to Family Reunification cases, resulting in a total of 8,540 families being served. Probation shares this program with DCFS and has approximately 300 slots allocated on a yearly basis.

The Linkages Program

Linkages is a service collaboration between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Linkages has been implemented in nearly half of all DCFS offices and corresponding DPSS District Offices/GAIN Regions serving these areas. Linkages was launched in the San Fernando Valley office in March 2006 and the Vermont Corridor office is scheduled to start in May, 2008.

Implementation of Linkages currently consists of four strategies to promote service coordination between DCFS and DPSS aimed at enhancing the outcomes of families involved in both child welfare and CalWORKs/other income assistance programs. These are:

- The co-location of DPSS Linkages GAIN Services Workers (LGSWs), which aid in the integration of CalWORKs expertise into DCFS Team Decision Making Meetings and enables DCFS Children's Social Workers (CSWs) to consult with the LGSW in

their office regarding individual case issues where DPSS programs could be relevant to assisting the family;

- Implementation of the Linkages Screening Tool (DCFS 5122), which evaluates potential eligibility of families or individuals to DPSS programs;
- Enhanced service coordination for eligible DCFS families simultaneously involved in CalWORKs/GAIN and Family Reunification Services (AB 429); and
- Enhanced service coordination for DCFS families receiving Family Preservation Services and eligible for CalWORKs/GAIN.

Two other Linkages strategies are under development, which would improve the coordination of services for homeless families as well as CalWORKs sanctioned families currently being served by both departments. In addition, we are working to enhance access to CalWORKs for relative caregivers through greater integration of DPSS eligibility staff at the DCFS Kinship Support Centers.

The remainder of FY 07-08 will focus on completing development of these additional strategies and determining how well the key goals of Linkages are being met. These goals are:

- Families or individuals known to DCFS who are not currently connected to DPSS resources, but could be, are provided with expedient methods to access DPSS programs;
- Families who are involved in both CalWORKs and child welfare services have the opportunity to maximize resources and establish the foundation for coordinated case planning to provide a safe and stable home for their children while working toward economic self-sufficiency.

Probation Title IV-E Initiatives

Probation has identified these two initiatives as priority for Fiscal Year 2007-2008:

- Enhanced Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning – combined assessment of mental health, substance abuse and behavioral problems – connect youth with most appropriate setting taking the above into account to limit number of placements. Using the LARRC, review of Juvenile Arrest/Probation history – The long range goal is to have 3 teams, 1 in each juvenile hall, consisting of a DMH Clinical Psychologist and a Probation Officer. Initially, there will be a pilot program located at Placement Administrative Services that will have one team for all 3 juvenile halls consisting of 3 Placement Zero Incarceration Program (ZIP) DPOs and a DMH Clinical Psychologist.
- Expansion of Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT)— Probation has adopted MST and FFT as the first line treatment approach to serve youth at risk of removal from the home and youth returning home from congregate care. MST and FFT were identified as program initiatives that have demonstrated reductions in long-term rates of re-arrest, reductions in Out of Home placements,

extensive improvements in family functioning and decreased mental health problems for serious juvenile offenders. These services are delivered in the home, school and community rather than in a clinical or residential treatment setting.

There are eight areas that have been identified as priority that are currently taking place simultaneously or will be implemented in the near future:

- Restructure of Placement Bureau—this restructure will include realignment of the placement management structure to meet the demands and tasks required, adoption of a new service delivery model grounded in evidence-based principles, reduce caseloads consistent with evidenced -based practices, standardized case management system using research rich proven techniques and services, family-focused interventions that have been proven to reduce risk factors that lead to child maltreatment, cross-systems case assessment and case planning, cross-systems youth and family transition planning and services and Placement Aftercare services.
- Utilization of Aftercare Support Services such as Wraparound, Community–Based Organization (CBO) services, Family Preservation, FFT/MST services and Faith-Based Services to facilitate successful family reunification and successful family and child safety, well-being and permanency through increasing protective factors and decreasing risk factors.
- Expansion of Evidenced Based Programs and Intensive Treatment Services such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST). These programs have proven over time through empirical and scientific research and evidence that family functioning improves significantly and impacts recidivism for probation youth.
- Expansion of Family Finding Services through the Placement Permanency Unit in collaboration with DCFS and Group Home Providers. The Probation Department plans to expand the work of this unit by enhancing current resources and providing additional resources such as specialized search engines. The unit's work will expand with increased collaboration with DCFS partners to create a seamless process for crossover youth and those youth who had a previous history with the dependency system. There will also be increased collaboration with Probation partners in camp and in the community, Group Home Providers and outside agencies to investigate every case where a youth is not returning to the home of parents.
- Expansion of Family Preservation Services will continue through collaboration with DCFS. Due to budget cuts, the funding for Family Preservation Services has been reduced; however, the Probation Department will continue with efforts to maximize the current allocation. Safe guards are being put in place to ensure that the designated slots for probation cannot be arbitrarily utilized for DCFS youth without approval from Probation.

- Expansion of Special Investigation Unit (SIU)/ Dual Supervision Unit which collaborates with staff from the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Mental Health to assess, incorporate placement and placement history, health, mental health, educational, family and other relevant information, and develop a case plan and joint recommendation to determine which status will best serve the interests of the youth and the protection of the community. SIU will be expanded and enhanced to include use cross-systems case assessment and case planning.
- Multi-Disciplinary Community Crisis Teams will be established to help families experiencing domestic violence and conflict, dealing with family substance abuse issues, and engaging in risky and maladaptive behaviors. Group home provider treatment staff, schools, and community-based services providers, including Wraparound and Family Preservation providers will partner with the Placement aftercare deputy probation officers (DPOs) and County agencies in providing individualized in-home services to probation families in crisis.
- Expansion of Placement Assessment Centers –In 2005, two group home sites, Boys Republic and Rancho San Antonio, were selected to establish Placement Assessment Centers (PACs) to provide a more comprehensive assessment for suitable placement minors. These assessments include a determination of psychosocial, educational, and mental health status as well as substance abuse use and gang involvement. The resulting extensive assessment packet information enables staff to make a more informed placement decision for these youth.

All of the above strategies, initiatives and programs play a significant role in laying the foundation for change in L.A. County, and, because of practice and policy changes, both Probation and DCFS has made progress in achieving safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. In Section III, the Department Of Children and Family Services' performance on the Federal outcome measures is described and analyzed, along with a narrative assessment of the outcomes. Again, due to the lack of a state-wide data tracking system, Probation's performance on the Federal outcome measures is not available; therefore, Section III, Child Welfare Outcomes will not have any probation information, except for Measure 8A—Independent Living, since both DCFS and Probation share this resource and data is collected on both populations. Some of those measures will be discussed in Section IV, Systemic Factors.

SECTION III



CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES

2004 - 2007

Child Welfare System Outcomes Summary for Los Angeles

2004 to 2007

The following chart provides data trends from the years 2004 to 2007 on outcome measures that indicate progress made in the provision of child welfare services to children and families. The data is used to track improvements in strategies that have been implemented and to support continuous high performance in outcome areas.

The outcome measures are consistent with federal CFSR measures and are used to track county performance over time. The following data were extracted from CWS/CMS and is published by CDSS in partnership with the University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research. These data reports serve to increase public awareness of the local child welfare system and establish the county's accountability for improving outcomes for children and families.

The national standard/goal for both safety indicators and permanency composites are based on statewide performance in 2004, 75th percentile. On 16 of the measures, DCFS is moving in the right direction and making steady progress, with the **most dramatic performance improvements** in the areas of:

- adoption within 24 months (62.91% increase);
- median time to reunification (29.92% decrease);
- group home placements (23.7% decrease) and
- percent of children reunified within 12 months (20.63% increase).

On eight of the measures, there was reduced performance, with the **most dramatic reductions in performance** in the areas of:

- re-entries following reunification (88.8% increase); however, this number is small relative to the number reunified and L.A. County remains very close to the National Standard Goal on this measure (refer to chart below);
- entry rates into foster care (21.8% increase), and
- children exiting to permanency after 24 months in care (9.7% decrease).

On four of the measures, we performed **above the national standard**, which included measures for:

- percent of children that did not experience maltreatment in foster care;
- adoption within 12 months (legally free);
- placement stability for children who have been in foster care for 12 months or less, and
- placement stability for children who have been in foster care for 12 to 24 months.

Finally, on 14 measures, we performed above the statewide level, all of which are highlighted in the Outcome Summary Chart.

Below is a summary chart of Los Angeles County's progress on each measure:



= L.A. County performing above the statewide level



= L.A County performing above the National Standard/Goal

Participation Rates: Referral Rates (Incidence per 1,000 children)						
Referral and Substantiation Rates for a given year are computed by dividing the unduplicated state count of children with a child abuse/neglect referral (or substantiation) by the child population and then multiplying by 1,000						
	Jan 04-Dec 04	Jan 05-Dec 05	Jan 06- Dec 06	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	49.6	48.3	48.3	N/A	Yes ☺	-2.6%
Los Angeles	42.7	42.7	44.3	N/A	No ☹	3.7%
Participation Rates: Substantiation Rates (Incidence per 1,000 children)						
Referral and Substantiation Rates for a given year are computed by dividing the unduplicated state count of children with a child abuse/neglect referral (or substantiation) by the child population and then multiplying by 1,000						
	Jan 04-Dec 04	Jan 05-Dec 05	Jan 06- Dec 06	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	11.2	11	10.8	N/A	Yes☺	-3.6%
Los Angeles	10.1	9.9	9.7	N/A	Yes ☺	-3.96%
Participation Rates: Entry Rates (Incidence per 1,000 children)						
Entry Rates for a given year are computed by dividing the unduplicated count of children entering foster care by the state child population and then multiplying by 1,000.						
	Jan 04-Dec 04	Jan 05-Dec 05	Jan 06- Dec 06	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	3.9	4.1	4	N/A	No ☹	2.6%
Los Angeles	3.2	3.8	3.9	N/A	No ☹	21.8%

Participation Rates: In Care Rates (Incidence per 1,000 children) In Care Rates for a given year are computed by dividing the Point In Time count of children in child welfare supervised foster care by the state child population and then multiplying by 1,000.						
	July 1, 2004	July 1, 2005	July 1, 2006	July 1, 2007	Direction?	Percent Change
California	8.0	7.7	7.5	7.3	Yes ☺	-8.8%
Los Angeles	9.7	9.0	8.5	8.4	Yes ☺	-13.4%
S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment Of all children who were victims of a substantiated maltreatment allegation during the first 6 months of the year, what percent were not victims of another substantiated allegation within the next 6-month period?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	91.2	92.3	92.5	94.6	Yes ☺	1.43%
Los Angeles	92.1	92.7	93.4	94.6	Yes ☺	1.41%
S2.1 No Maltreatment in Foster Care Of all children served in foster care during the year, what percent were not victims of a substantiated maltreatment allegation by a foster parent or facility staff member?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	99.86	99.76	99.74	99.68	No ☹	-.12%
Los Angeles	99.93	99.85	99.82	99.68	No, however, L.A. is above the National Goal	-.11%

Measure C1.1 Percent of Children Reunified within 12 months Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	60.2%	62.9%	63.6%	75.2%	Yes ☺	5.60%
Los Angeles	50.4%	58.3%	60.8%	75.2%	Yes ☺	20.63%
Measure C1.2 Median Time To Reunification (Exit Cohort) Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of latest removal from home until the date of discharge to reunification?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	8.5	8.1	7.9	5.4	Yes ☺	-7.59%
Los Angeles	11.7	8.9	8.2	5.4	Yes ☺	-29.92%
Measure C1.3 Reunification Within 12 Months (Entry Cohort) Of all children entering foster care for the first time in the 6-month period who remained in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from the data of latest removal from home?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	39.2	39.5	41.1	48.4	Yes ☺	4.85%
Los Angeles	35	37.7	37.8	48.4	Yes ☺	8%

Measure C1.4 Reentry Following Reunification (Exit Cohort) Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year, what percent reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	11.5	12	n.a.	9.9	No ☹	4.35%
Los Angeles	5.4	10.2	n.a.	9.9	No ☹	88.89%
Measure C2.1 Adoption Within 24 Months (Exit Cohort) Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what percent were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	29.2	30	32.6	36.6	Yes ☺	11.64%
Los Angeles	15.1	17.7	24.6	36.6	Yes ☺	62.91%
Measure C2.2 Median Time to Adoption (exit Cohort) Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of latest removal from home until the date of discharge to adoption?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	31.6	30.6	29.5	27.3	Yes ☺	-6.65%
Los Angeles	40.1	37.8	33.6	27.3	Yes ☺	-16.21%

Measure C2.3 Adoption Within 12 Months (17 months in care) Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of latest removal from home until the date of discharge to adoption?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	13.7	14.1	14.6	22.7	Yes ☺	6.57%
Los Angeles	12.2	12.6	13.7	22.7	Yes ☺	12.3%
Measure C2.4 Legally Free Within 6 Months Of all children in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer and not legally free for adoption on the first day of the year, what percent became legally free within the next 6 months?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	5.4	5.1	5	10.9	No ☹	-7.41%
Los Angeles	4.8	4.7	4.9	10.9	Yes ☺	2.08%
Measure C2.5 Adoption Within 12 Months (Legally Free) Of all children in foster care who became legally free for adoption during the year, what percent were then discharged to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	57.5	54.9	Not avail.	53.7	No ☹	-4.5%
Los Angeles	59.1	59.1	Not avail.	53.7	Yes ☺	No change, but L.A. remains above the national standard

Measure C3.1 Exits to Permanency (24 Months in Care) Of all children in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the year, what percent were discharged to a permanent home by the end of the year and prior to turning 18?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	19.1	18.1	17.8	29.1	No ☹	-6.81%
Los Angeles	19.6	18.6	17.7	29.1	No ☹	-9.69%
Measure C3.2 Exits to Permanency (Legally Free at Exit) Of all children discharged from foster care during the year who were legally free for adoption, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to turning 18?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	97.6	97.2	97.2	98	No ☹	-0.41%
Los Angeles	97	96.6	96.7	98	No ☹	-0.31%
Measure C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipated/Age 18) Of all children in foster care during the year who were either discharged to emancipation or turned 18 while still in care, what percent had been in foster care for 3 years or longer?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	64	62.5	61.4	37.5	Yes ☺	-4.06%
Los Angeles	68.1	65.8	64.2	37.5	Yes ☺	-5.73%

Measure C4.1 Placement Stability (8 Days to 12 Months in Care) Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care at least 8 days but less than 12 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	81.8	81.3	82.4	86	Yes ☺	0.73%
Los Angeles	88.2	87.4	87.1	86	No, however, L.A. is above the National Goal	-1.25%
Measure C4.2 Placement Stability (12 to 24 Months in Care) Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	59.4	60.6	60.9	65.4	Yes ☺	5.53%
Los Angeles	72.7	71.6	71.8	65.4	No; however, L.A. is above the National Goal	-1.24%
Measure C4.3 Placement Stability (At Least 24 Months in Care) Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings?						
	Jul 04 – Jun 05	Jul 05 – Jun 06	Jul 06 – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	36.2	37.4	34.9	41.8	No ☹	-3.59%
Los Angeles	41.1	39.4	39.9	41.8	No ☹	-3%

Measure 2B Timely Response (Immediate Response Compliance)							
Of all the referrals that required an immediate response, what percent of those referrals received a timely response?							
	July – Sept 04	July – Sept 05	Apr – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change	
California	95.1	96.1	96.5	N/A	Yes ☺	1.5%	
Los Angeles	97.5	97.0	97.2	N/A	No ☹	-0.3%	
Measure 2B Timely Response (10 Day Response Compliance)							
Of all the referrals that required a 10 day response, what percent of those referrals had a timely response?							
	July – Sept 04	July – Sept 05	Apr – Jun 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change	
California	92	93.6	90.7	N/A	No ☹	-1.4%	
Los Angeles	97.3	98.2	96.6	N/A	No ☹	-0.7%	
Measure 2C Timely Social Worker Visits with Child							
Of all children who required a monthly social worker visit, what percent received a monthly visit?							
	Jul-04	Jul-05	Jul-06	Jul-07	Direction?	Percent Change	
Los Angeles	87.4	88.9	91.4	91.7	Yes ☺	5%	
Measure 4A Siblings All Placed Together (point in time reports)							
What percent of all sibling groups were placed all together?							
	Jul 1 04	Jul 1 05	Jul 1 06	Jul 1 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	43.2	44.9	46.2	48.3	N/A	Yes ☺	11.8%
Los Angeles	41.2	43.4	44.8	46.6	N/A	Yes ☺	13.1%

Measure 4A Siblings – Some or All Placed Together (point in time reports)							
What percent of all sibling groups had some or all siblings placed together?							
	Jul 1 04	Jul 1 05	Jul 1 06	Jul 1 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	66.2	67.6	68.3	69.7	N/A	Yes ☺	5.3%
Los Angeles	66.2	67.8	68.5	69.7	N/A	Yes ☺	5.3%
Measure 4B Placement Type (point in time reports)							
These reports are derived from a longitudinal database and provide information on all entries to out of home care during the time period specified.							
Relative Placements:							
	Jul 1 04	Jul 1 05	Jul 1 06	Jul 1 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	32.7	33.7	35.4	36.1	N/A	Yes ☺	10.4%
Los Angeles	34.7	36.3	39.8	40.7	N/A	Yes ☺	17.3%
Foster Home Placements:							
	Jul 1 04	Jul 1 05	Jul 1 06	Jul 1 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	12.6	11.3	10.4	9.5	N/A	N/A	-24.6%
Los Angeles	9.6	7.8	6.9	6.3	N/A	N/A	-34.4%
Foster Family Agency Placements:							
	Jul 1 04	Jul 1 05	Jul 1 06	Jul 1 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	23.1	23.9	25	26	N/A	N/A	12.6%
Los Angeles	20.8	21.2	22.1	23.4	N/A	N/A	12.5%

Measure 4B Placement Type (point in time reports)							
These reports are derived from a longitudinal database and provide information on all entries to out of home care during the time period specified.							
Group Home Placements							
	Jul 1 04	Jul 1 05	Jul 1 06	Jul 1 07	National Standard/Goal	Direction?	Percent Change
California	9.3	9.1	8.8	8.2	N/A	Yes ☺	-11.8%
Los Angeles	7.6	7.3	6.6	5.8	N/A	Yes ☺	-23.7%
Measure 4E (1) ICWA Placement Preferences for Children Identified with ICWA Eligibility							
ICWA Eligible: Relative Placements							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	37.6	28.4	27.5		N/A	N/A	-26.86
Los Angeles	45.5	32.3	28.3	33.8	N/A	N/A	-25.71
ICWA Eligible: Non-Relative Placements, Indian Substitute Care Provider							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	5.9	7.2	7.3		N/A	N/A	23.73
Los Angeles	0.5	0.5	1.3	0.7	N/A	N/A	40.00
ICWA Eligible: Non-Relative Placements, Non-Indian Substitute Care Provider							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	44	51.9	54.4		N/A	N/A	23.66
Los Angeles	32.3	42.3	48.4	41.4	N/A	N/A	28.17

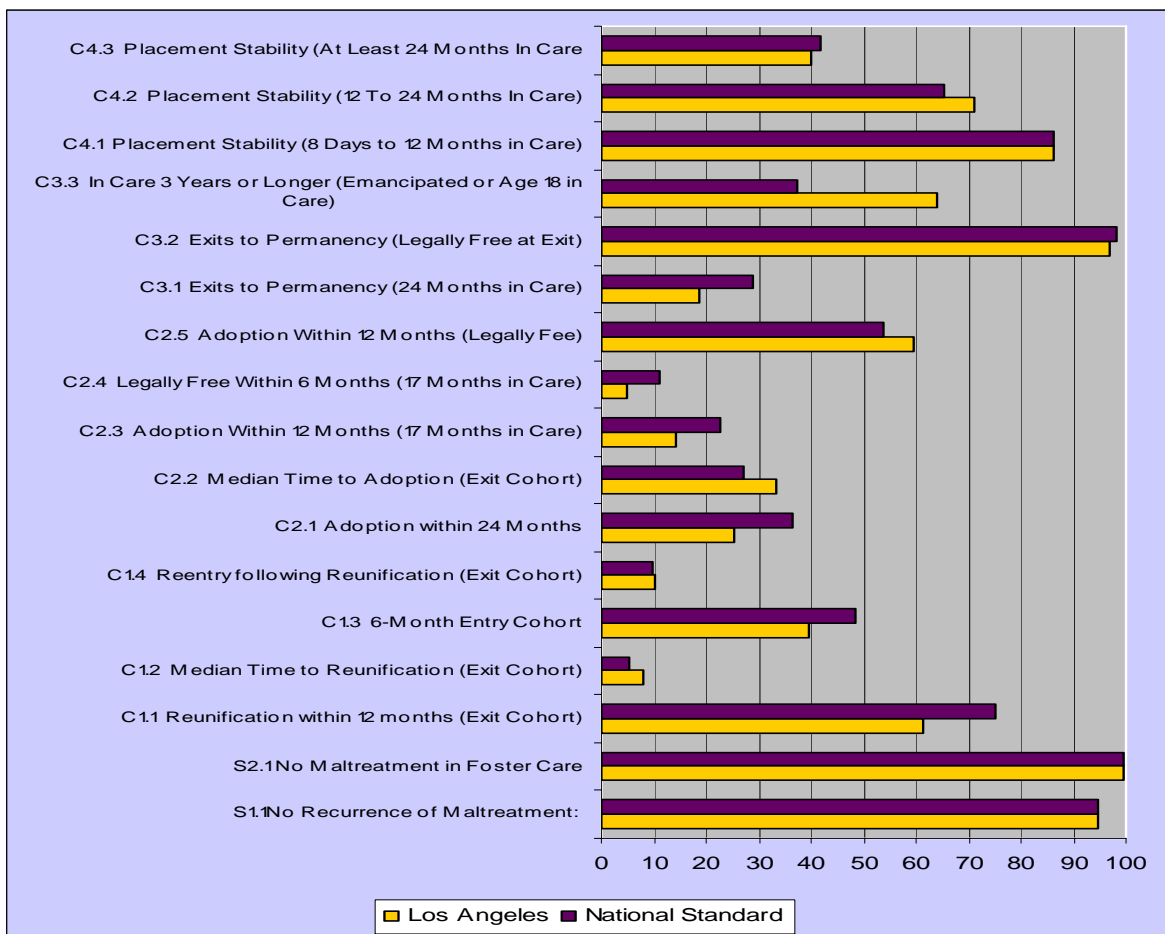
Measure 4E (1) ICWA Placement Preferences for Children Identified with ICWA Eligibility							
ICWA Eligible: Non-Relative – Ethnicity of Substitute Care Provider Missing							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	12.4	12.5	10.7		N/A	N/A	-13.71
Los Angeles	21.7	24.9	22	24.1	N/A	N/A	11.06
Measure 4E (2) Percent of Indian Children (Primary and Multi-Ethnic) Placement Preferences							
Multi-Ethnic: Relative							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	33.9	23.6	24.4		N/A	N/A	-28.02
Los Angeles	38.1	27.1	29.8	31.8	N/A	N/A	-16.54
Multi-Ethnic: Non-Relative Indian Substitute Care Provider							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	4.3	5.8	5.0		N/A	N/A	16.28
Los Angeles	1.0	1.1	0.4	1.6	N/A	N/A	60.00
Multi-Ethnic: Non-Relative Non-Indian Substitute Care Provider							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	48.9	58.4	61.1		N/A	N/A	24.95
Los Angeles	38.5	45.4	49.1	43.8	N/A	N/A	13.77

Multi-Ethnic: Non-Relative – Ethnicity Missing							
	Apr-Jun 04	Apr-Jun 05	Apr-Jun 06	Apr-Jun 07	National Standard	Direction?	Percent Change
California	12.9	12.2	9.5		N/A	N/A	-26.36
Los Angeles	22.4	26.4	20.8	22.9	N/A	N/A	2.23
Measure 8A: Independent Living Program							
ILP Completed							
	Oct 03-Sep 04	Oct 04-Sep 05	Oct 05-Sep 06	Oct 06-Sep 07	N/A	N/A	N/A
Los Angeles	6,922	8,087	8,317	9,357	N/A	N/A	N/A
High School Diploma or GED Completed							
	Oct 03-Sep 04	Oct 04-Sep 05	Oct 05-Sep 06	Oct 06-Sep 07	N/A	N/A	N/A
Los Angeles	1,818	1,980	1,749	1,789	N/A	N/A	N/A
Completed Vocational Training							
	Oct 03-Sep 04	Oct 04-Sep 05	Oct 05-Sep 06	Oct 06-Sep 07	N/A	N/A	N/A
Los Angeles	723	504	545	478	N/A	N/A	N/A
Enrolled in College/Higher Education							
	Oct 03-Sep 04	Oct 04-Sep 05	Oct 05-Sep 06	Oct 06-Sep 07	N/A	N/A	N/A
Los Angeles	1,430	1,545	1,293	1,330	N/A	N/A	N/A

Employed Youths							
	Oct 03-Sep 04	Oct 04-Sep 05	Oct 05-Sep 06	Oct 06-Sep 07	N/A	N/A	N/A
Los Angeles	1,675	1,766	1,501	1,399	N/A	N/A	N/A

L.A. County Performance Relative to Federal Standard/Goal:

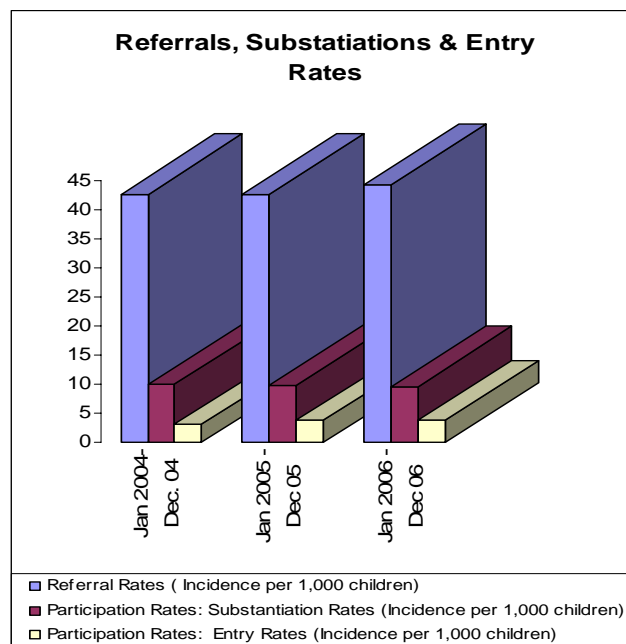
The following graph reflects how close Los Angeles County comes to meeting the Federal Standard/Goal in each performance measure. DCFS met the national standard goals for measures C4.2, C4.1, C2.5, and S2.1. Progress was made on all of the measures except for measures C4.3, C3.2, C3.1, and C1.4. L.A. County is furthest from reaching the National Standard Goals on the following measures: C3.3, C3.1, and C1.1.



Narrative Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes

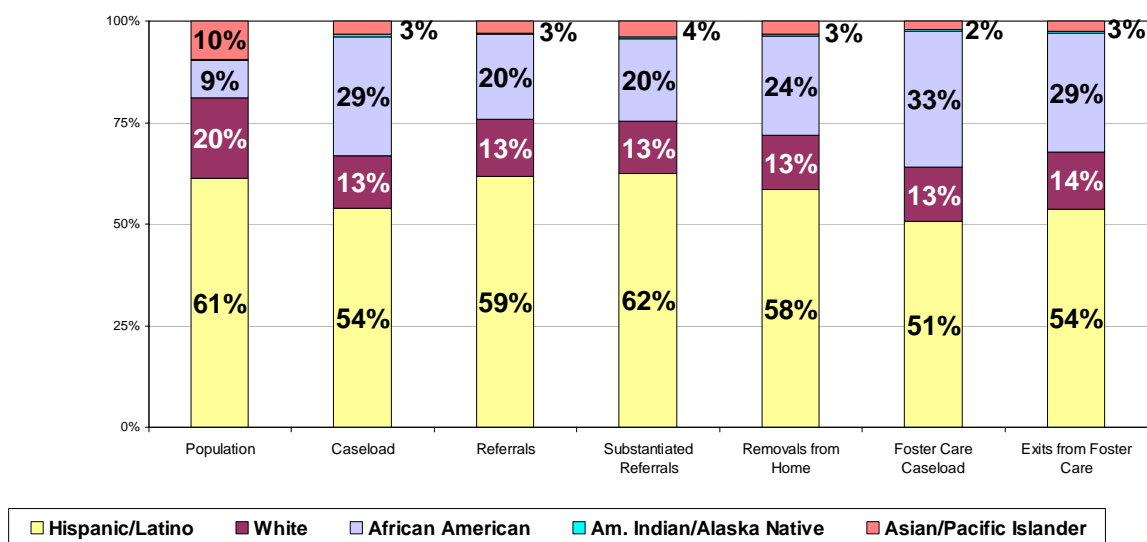
Participation Rates: Referrals, Substantiations, Entries, and Caseload:

During the past three fiscal periods, DCFS has seen a gradual increase in referral and entry rates, but a gradual reduction in substantiation rates. Since FY 04-05, referral rates increased by 3.7% and entry rates increase by 21.8%. Substantiation rates, however, decreased by 3.96%. Referral rates are beyond the control of DCFS, as any member of the community may call the Child Protection Hotline to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Referral rates may be caused by socio-economic factors, such as a declining economy and housing costs that have become unaffordable for many in Los Angeles, but causes to the hike in referral rates are purely speculative. The increased entry rates since 2004 may be influenced by the implementation of Team Decision Making (TDM) and Structured Decision Making (SDM), as both interventions require the social worker to conduct a thorough assessment on all the risk and safety issues that are affecting child safety. Purposes of TDM and SDM include supporting the social worker in making the best possible decisions on a case, not reducing entry rates. While increases in the use of TDM and SDM were occurring, so were increases in entry rates.



Caseload, Referrals, Substantiations, Removals, Out-of Home Care, and Exits by Ethnicity:

The chart below shows that, in relation to the population, African-American children are largely overrepresented in caseload, referrals, substantiated referrals, removals from home, foster care caseload (out-of-home care), and exits from foster care. Hispanic children are overrepresented in substantiated referrals.



Measure S1.1: Repeat Maltreatment: How effective is DCFS in reducing the recurrence of child maltreatment?

DCFS continues to make steady improvement in protecting children from repeat maltreatment, as there was a 1.41% increase from 2004 in the number of children who *did not experience* repeat maltreatment. The current data shows that 93.4% of children are free from repeat maltreatment during the 6 month period that followed the initial substantiated abuse report. Though DCFS has not met the National Standard goal of 94.6%, we are moving closer to achieving this goal each year. It should also be noted that Los Angeles County's performance (93.4%) is higher than the statewide performance (92.5%) in this measure.

Repeat Maltreatment and Ethnicity:

For the 2007 calendar year, children who experienced repeat maltreatment at higher percentage rates were American Indian/Alaskan Native children (13.6%), as compared to White children (8.8%), African-American children (8.3%), Hispanic children (6.7%),


and Asian children (4.6%). Overall, 7.2 % of children experienced repeat maltreatment for the calendar year of 2007.


Recurrence of Maltreatment – Calendar Year 2007				
Ethnicity	# of Repeat Maltreatment	# of No Repeats	Grand Total	Percent of Repeat Maltx.
American Indian	24	153	177	13.6%
White	540	5625	6165	8.8%
African-American	692	7668	8360	8.3%
Hispanic/Latino	1710	23,646	25,356	6.7%
Asian	63	1302	1365	4.6%
Filipino	12	304	316	3.8%
Other	4	398	402	1%
Grand Total	3,045	39,096	42,141	7.2%

Repeat Maltreatment and Age:

The ages of the children most likely to experience repeat maltreatment are teens who are 15 (9%), 13 (8%), 16 (8%) and 14 (7.9%) years of age. The two least likely to experience repeat maltreatment are children under 1 years of age (5.8%) and youth that are 18 yrs. old. The chart below shows the number and percent of children by age who were maltreated again during the 2007 calendar year, from most likely to experience maltreatment to least likely:

Age	Percent of Repeat Maltreatment	
0	5.8%	
1	6.3%	
2	6.9%	
3	6.7%	
4	6.6%	
5	7.6%	
6	6.8%	
7	7.2%	
8	7.4%	
9	7.2%	
10	7.4%	
11	7.7%	
12	7.7%	
13	8%	
14	7.9%	
15	9%	
16	8%	
17	6.4%	
18	5.7%	

 = % of repeat maltreatment is above the overall 7.2% repeat maltreatment rate

 = % of repeat maltreatment is below the overall 7.2% repeat maltreatment rate

DCFS currently implements various strategies that were described in the first section of this report that impacts the safety of children: Structured Decision Making, Team Decision making, Multidisciplinary Assessment Teams, Differential Response, and the Point of Engagement service delivery system that has been in effect since 2004.

The implementation of the Standardized Safety Assessment process ensures that families are systematically assessed for safety, risk and needs throughout the life of the case. As cases move forward to comprehensive assessment and service planning, services and resources are evaluated for effectiveness in reducing risk and potential for addressing necessary changes in family functioning as follows:

- Assessments are performed prior to completing first face-to-face contact and recorded within 48 hours;
- Risk assessments are required on all substantiated and inconclusive in-person responses within 30 days of first face-to-face contact; and,
- Family strength and needs (including those of the caregiver) are assessed on all open cases (on initial cases, within 30 days of first face-to-face contact and at each six month review).

The partnerships that DCFS has with other County departments, such as the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Health Services (DHS), L.A. County Probation Department, and the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) helps to remove barriers to ensure that children and families receive appropriate priority for services. For instance, there is DMH staff co-located in eight regional DCFS offices, creating capacity for systems navigation, case-management, consultation, and training services. DMH staff is regularly invited to and attend Team Decision Making meetings to assist with the needs assessment and to link families to the appropriate mental health services.

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) are also co-located within each regional office to help assure that children's medical needs are met. PHNs assist CSWs by explaining medical conditions that a child may have and providing accepted standards of care, including medical regiments, equipment and supplies. PHNs provide resources to the parent(s), locate a CHDP provider, if appropriate, consult with school personnel, consult with hospital personnel and discharge planner, as needed, request medical records, call community agencies for various resources and document any findings and actions taken in the Health Notebook on CWS/CMS.

Six Medical Hubs are now available to provide the state-required initial medical exams and the forensic exams for DCFS served children who are newly detained. Initial medical examinations are to be conducted within the first 72 hours of initial placement

for high risk children and children from 0-3 years of age; all other children are to have their initial medical examination within the first 30 days of initial placement. The Medical Hubs offer forensic, medical and mental health expertise and assessment capacity 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. For Fiscal Year 2006-2007, there were a total of 14,631 visits to the HUBs by families served by DCFS. A seventh HUB is currently under development.

The Linkages Project that is being implemented in L.A. County is another example of a partnership that is designed to provide comprehensive, individualized services to families to support them in achieving the linked goals of self-sufficiency and safety for their children when being served by child welfare and Cal-WORKS. Through protocols designed to enhance communication and case coordination between the child welfare social worker and CalWORKS social worker, these two departments collaborate to improve outcomes for at-risk children and families.

DCFS social workers conduct timely monthly visits to assess progress on case plan goals and assess any issues which might affect the safety of the child. Policy states that each visit shall include a private discussion with the child outside the presence and immediate vicinity of the caretaker. The contents are not to be shared with the caretaker unless the CSW believes the child may be in danger of harming him or herself, or others, the CSW believes disclosure is necessary to meet the needs of the child or the child consents to disclosure. The CSW is to then document in the CWS/CMS Contact Notebook the fact that a private discussion took place. Supervising Children's Social Workers can then verify and continue to monitor the quality of the CSW's visits with the child. Data shows that the compliance with completing timely monthly visits has risen by 5.4% since 2003, with the current compliance rate averaging 93%.

L.A. County CSWs also respond to child maltreatment referrals in a timely manner, thereby increasing the likelihood that children and families are provided with a safety assessment and services in order to avoid any potential repeat maltreatment. Data shows that for those referrals that require an immediate response by the Department, CSWs are able to complete their initial contact in a timely manner 97.2% of the time. For those referrals that require a response by the Department within 5 days, CSWs are able to complete their initial contact in a timely manner 96.6% of the time. It should be noted that L.A.'s compliance with timely responses to referrals is greater than the state's as a whole. In addition, L.A. County's policy on response times is stricter than the State's regulations.

Measure S2.1: No maltreatment in foster care: How effective is DCFS in reducing the risk of harm to children in foster care?

L.A. County performs above the national standard goal in assuring that children are safe from abuse while in foster care. During the State Fiscal Year 2006-2007, 99.82% of all children served in Los Angeles' foster care system were not victims of a substantiated maltreatment allegation by a foster parent or facility staff member.

The department has consistently performed above the national standard goal on this measure over the past several years due to many factors, including timely responses to all referrals, high rates of compliance (93%) with monthly face-to-face visits with children in foster care, the implementation of Structured Decision Making and the utilization of team meetings that addresses children's needs, safety issues, and risk factors. In addition, with the implementation of Point of Engagement (described in Section I), the Department has made great strides in building community partnerships for the purpose of collectively supporting children and their caregivers. The Family to Family Initiative's strategy of Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families has also been implemented in order to improve open communication among DCFS staff, families, caregivers, and the community. For example, SPA 8 holds monthly Resource Family meetings, where various trainings and presentations by service providers have been offered to caregivers so that they may better informed and aware of the issues and resources that are available to help them not only care for the children, but to also better understand and cope with the challenges of providing foster care. In SPA 7, the Spanish speaking Foster Parent Association meets on a monthly basis at the Santa Fe Springs office. This collaborative effort provides an opportunity for foster parents to network amongst each other as well as obtain information in a quick and efficient manner so that they feel better supported, informed, and prepared to provide appropriate care for children.

Training and support services are provided to foster caregivers, adoptive parents, as well as relative caregivers to help them provide appropriate care to children. Please refer to Section III/Systemic Factors of this report, in the Resource Parent Recruitment, Licensing and Retention section (Systemic Factor #3), which describes the training and support services provided to caregivers.

Before children are placed in the home of a relative or non-related extended family member, CWS/CMS searches, CLETS and CACI clearances must be done immediately or, absent any extraordinary circumstances, during the first 23 hours following removal of the child on all relative and non-relative extended family members requesting placement. Such a placement cannot occur unless the results of the CLETS, are obtained and those results respectively reveal no convictions (other than a minor traffic violation) and that the information obtained from searches of CWS/CMS and CACI have

been determined not to pose a risk to the child. The CSW then directs the prospective caregiver(s), other adults living in the home and all persons having significant contact with the child to the appropriate Live-Scan location by either scheduling an appointment or going into the Live-Scan facility on a walk-in basis, as soon as possible, but no later than 10 calendar days. Other children in the home over the age of 14 must have a Juvenile Automated Index (JAI) clearance if the social worker has reason to believe that (s)he has a criminal record. The CSW also ensures that the prospective caregiver and every adult residing in the home or having significant contact with the child complete the LIC 508 D, Out-Of-State Disclosure & Criminal Record Statement Foster Family Homes, Small Family Homes, Certified Family Homes.

To ensure the safety of the child while in out-of-home care, the CSW also completes an initial in-home inspection to determine if there are any immediate risks to the health, safety, or personal rights of the child. The CSW also assesses the prospective caregiver's ability to care for the child's needs and consults with the SCSW to obtain authorization to place the child in the relative or non-related extended family member's home. The placement of the child in the home is considered to be temporary until the Kinship Support Division has approved the home, as it is the sole responsibility of the Kinship Support Division to determine if a home can or cannot be ultimately approved.

DCFS practice calls for social workers to continually assess the child's safety in placement by making all required in-person contacts and interviewing the child in private in order to encourage the child to discuss any concerns and express his or her feelings about his placement and the relationship with the caregiver(s) and others living in the foster placement. In addition, collateral contacts are made in order to monitor the child's progress, level of functioning, and any issues that may have arisen.

Maltreatment in Foster Care and Placement Type:

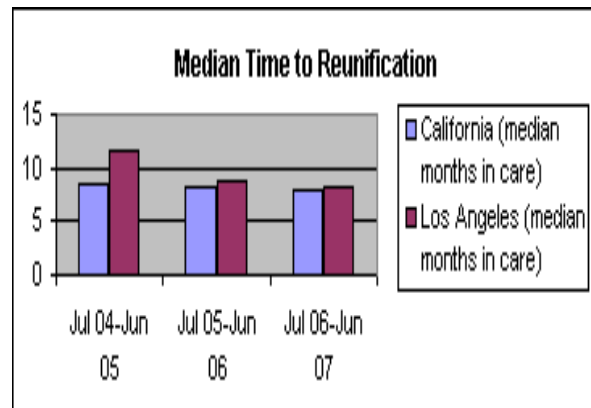
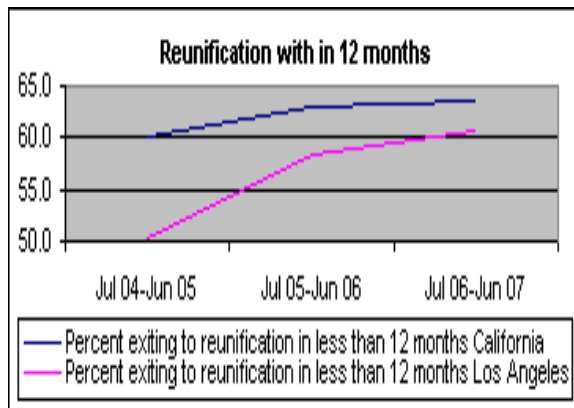
It should be noted that if abuse in foster care occurs, it is most likely to happen in Kinship Care. According to the data, 67.9% of abuse in foster care occurs in Kinship Care, 21.6% in a FFA home, 9.9% in a County Foster Home, 0.4% in a Small Family Home, and 0.2% in a Court Specified Home.

Measures C1.1, C1.2, and C1.3: Reunification: How effective is DCFS in helping children in foster care return safely to their families within a 12 month period?

California law requires, except in specified exceptional circumstances, that reasonable efforts to return the child to his or her family occur for at least 12 months; for children who are three years or younger, the time period is six months. Reunification services may be extended up to a total of 18 months only upon a finding of a compelling reason at the 12 month permanency hearing that there is a substantial probability the child will be returned if services are provided for another six months. When reunification services

are terminated, the court is required to order a selection and implementation hearing to determine a plan of adoption or guardianship unless there is a compelling reason that adoption or guardianship is not appropriate for the child.

L.A. County has made continual improvement in reunifying children with their families in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home, going from 50.4% of children reunified during FY 2004-2005 to 60.8% of children being reunified during FY 2006-2007, a 20.63% increase since 2004. The median length of stay for children in foster care reduced from 11.7 months in FY 2004-2005 to 8.2 months in FY 2006-2007, a 29.92% change decrease.



The type of placement affects the rate of reunification. Data shows that children are most likely to be reunified within 12 months when placed with a Foster Family Agency (65.3%), and least likely to be reunified within 12 months when placed in a group home (48.9%) or court specified home (42.9%).

Placement Type and Reunification Rates:

	Percent Reunified Within 12 Months		
Type of Placement:	FY 2004-2005	FY 2005-2006	FY 2006-2007
Foster Home	56%	59.9%	65.3%
Foster Family Agency	53.7%	62.4%	64.7%
Relative Care	49.3%	59%	60%
Group Home	38.8%	39.8%	48.9%
Court Specified	37.5%	36.4%	42.9%

Time to Reunification and Placement Type:

Current data (FY 2006-2007) shows that children who are placed with Foster Family Agencies and with Relatives have the lowest median months in care (from latest removal to reunification) - 7.5 months for children in Foster Family Agency care and 8.4 months for children placed in Kinship care. In comparison, the median months for youth placed in Group Home care is 12.3 months. During the past three fiscal periods, there was a general reduction in the median length of stay for children in Kinship, FFA, and Group care. However, Native Americans placed in Kinship, Group Home, and Foster Family Agency care had an increase in the median months in care and Asians showed an increase when placed in Group Home care. Hispanic and Caucasian children showed a reduction in their median lengths of stay in all of the above placement types.

Time to Reunification and Age of Child:

The age of children who were most likely to spend the longest time in foster care during FY 2006-2007, based on median months, were 3-5 year olds (9.8 months), 6-10 yr. olds (8.9 months), and 1-2 yr. olds (8.7 months), and 16-17 yr. olds (8.5 months), while the age of children who spent shorter periods of time in care were children under one (3.7 months), and 11-15 yr. olds (8.1 months).

Factors influencing this improvement with reunification include the various changes in policy and practice, including the implementation of Family to Family, TDM, POE, and Concurrent Planning. The average length of time a child remains in foster care went from 41.5 to 18.8 months from 2001 to 2006.

The Family to Family Initiative supports reunification through TDMs, Icebreaker meetings (initial meeting between parent and foster parent), parent mentors, building community connections, and the recruitment of resource families that are located in those areas where there are the greatest number of removals. Finding community-based placements helps to make visitation more convenient, helps to encourage the relationship between the birth parent and resource parent, and assures that the child's connections to school, friends, and community remain constant.

During Removal TDMs, critical issues that are addressed that will impact safety and permanency outcomes include: 1) reason for referral (allegations, precipitating event, child's current situation, 2) family information (names, ages, and location of each child and parent and relationship of all people living in the home), 3) previous history (history and disposition of allegations, previous DCFS services, 4) family strengths, 5) safety concerns and risk issues (utilization of the SDM Safety Assessment and the Risk Assessment to guide discussion on safety concerns), 6) supports, 7) service needs

(including discussion on what would the safety plan look like if the child were to remain or return to their home), 8) placement options (least restrictive options, the relatives' willingness and attitude towards working on reunification efforts for the child, concurrent planning efforts), 9) transitional issues (school change, medical record transfer, continuing contact with family, friends, and community, etc.), 10) plans for initial visit, and 11) relational issues between birth parent and child's resource parent.

During the TDM, the Facilitator or the CSW/SCSW explains the concept of Concurrent Planning and provides Full Disclosure to assure that the family and their supports are fully aware of the consequences should the birth parents not resolve the issues that brought them to the attention of DCFS and Dependency Court. DCFS policy states that the CSW shall provide full disclosure to the parents in all stages of case planning. All parents need to be informed of what the benefits and consequences are if they cannot or will not abide by the case plan within the prescribed time.

Challenges:

- Placing children within proximity to their community of origin is a major challenge, which can make reunification efforts more difficult due to the strain that it places on parental ability to visit their child in foster care, especially when many parents do not have access to transportation. During the latest data available, July 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007, 298 children were placed in the same office service coverage area while 1,229 children were placed outside the office coverage area. This translates to 11.6% of children experiencing their initial placement within the office catchment area while 47.9% of children were placed outside the office catchment area. However, it should also be noted that there has been an increase in relative placements during the past three fiscal periods.
- Stakeholders report that there is a lack of professional, culturally relevant, bilingual services in some communities where parents live, thereby creating barriers to reunification.
- Often, parents may be suffering from addictions and dependencies that require a greater length of time to resolve before a safe reunification can occur.

Measure C1.4: Reentry Following Reunification: How effective is DCFS in preventing multiple entries of children into foster care?

Performance on this measure has declined since FY 2004-2005, as the reentry rate increased from 5.4% to 10.2%, an 88.89% change increase. However, L.A. County is still very close to meeting this measure's National Standard Goal of 9.9.

Re-entry by Ethnicity and Age:

Children that were most likely to re-enter foster care during FY 05-06 were Hispanic children (55.5%), followed by African American (32.5%), White (9.5%), Asian/Pacific Islander (2.1%) and American Indian (0.3%) children. The most common age of children to re-enter foster care were between 5 and 9 years old (24.8%), followed by 10-13 yr. olds (23%), 0-2 yr. olds (21.8%), 14-15 yr. olds (16.6%), 16-17 yr. olds (6.1%), and 18 (and over) yr. olds (0.9%).

Re-entry by Placement Type:

As of FY 05-06, children that were last placed in Group Home care were most likely to re-enter foster care (18.6%), followed by children that had been placed in FFAs (11.6%), Kinship Care (8.2%), Foster Family Homes (7.9%), and then Guardian homes (6.2%). This data may signify that children who required a higher level of care while in foster care also requires access to greater resources when reunified with their family and greater capability by the family to parent the child, both of which presents greater challenges for the reunifying family.

One reason for the decline of performance on reentry rates may be that DCFS is reunifying many more children within a 12 month period; thus, there are greater numbers of children reentering, which may be revealing a counterbalance effect. This trend seems to be common across the nation. There seems to be a greater need for transitional type of services and improved transitional planning, with the support of aftercare services once a child is reunified with his or her family. There is also a greater need for the Department and the community to work with the family in establishing a network of community-based support and a plan to help the family understand how to utilize resources before family and life issues grow into a crisis situation that requires DCFS level intervention. Children who return home from high level group homes or specialized care are often very difficult for parents to manage, which may increase foster care re-entry. And, without the ability to use trial home visits as a way to gradually transition a child home is an additional challenge to preparing parents and their children for reunification.

Although performance decreased on this measure, L.A. County has policies and practices that support the identification and ongoing assessment of safety factors and service needs. The implementation of SDM, TDM, Wraparound, Family Preservation, and assessment practices by the CSW all help to address those critical factors that influence whether or not a child may re-enter foster care.

Exit from Placement TDMs are being utilized at an increasing rate even though it is not mandatory for CSWs to conduct these type of TDMs due to the impact that it would have on an already high workload. Use of this type of TDM, which is held to address the

changes and progress that have been made since removal, as well as transition issues surrounding reunification, has jumped from 299 in 2005 to 1,376 in 2007, a 360.2% increase. Of all the referrals for TDMs that are received, only 10.7% are for Exit from Placement TDMs. Although the use of this type of TDM has increased, the majority of children and families that are reunified do not receive its benefits since CSWs are not required at this time to refer families to Exit from Placement TDMs. Critical discussion items that are discussed in an Exit from Placement TDM include 1) the identification and acknowledgement of family strengths, 2) a description of the initial safety and risk factors that first brought the family to the attention of DCFS, 3) a discussion regarding the results of the Reunification Reassessment and the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment and how the safety and risk factors been reduced an/or eliminated, 4) a discussion regarding the services that the family has completed and the level of compliance and participation in such services, 5) a description of the behavioral changes/evidence/observations that indicate that the services and interventions have reduced or eliminated the safety and risk factors, 6) a discussion regarding the current living conditions of the birth parents/legal guardians, and 7) a discussion on transitional issues (e.g. transfer of services and support, school change, medical record transfer, continuing contact with former caregiver(s), family, and friends, etc.). Ideally, the Exit from Placement TDMs are held before unmonitored visitation with the birth parents becomes effective so as to assure the child's safety.

The TDM Database captures the recommendations being made as a result of the Exit from Placement TDM. In 2007, 48.1% of the recommendations were for Reunification, 5.9% for Adoption, 2.3% for Guardianship, 5.5% for Emancipation, 7% for Termination of Jurisdiction, and 28.4% of the recommendations were for the child to remain in placement while the Department works on the establishment of a permanent plan.

For children receiving Wraparound services, 86% of Wraparound families continued to use community-based services 6 months post graduation, and 89% of the children remained with family 6 months post graduation. These numbers reflect success with maintaining children in their homes, especially given that the population served by Wraparound tends to be children and youth with greater needs. The Wraparound program offers more intensive monitoring of a family's progress and allows issues related to potential reoccurrence to be identified and resolved early during the reunification process. However, Wraparound services are provided to a relatively small number of children that have been identified as needing a higher level of care due to special behavioral and emotional challenges.

Challenges:

- The utilization of the Reunification Assessment SDM tool is only at 43.6% and the use of Exit from Placement TDMs are underutilized.

- Stakeholders report that there needs to be greater effort towards creating transitional plans and transitional services for reunifying families, as well as assuring that the family has access to after-care services and support within their own community.
- While Family Preservation services are utilized to help maintain the family after reunification occurs, the services are not available to all eligible families, as there are a shortage of Family Preservation slots that are available.

Measure C2.1: Adoption Within 24 Months (Exit Cohort)/Measure C2.2 Median Time to Adoption/C2.3 Adoption Within 12 Months (17 months in care): How effective is DCFS in achieving timely adoption when that is appropriate for a child?

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services has shown an improvement in the percent of children discharged from foster care to finalized adoption in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home. Comparison of percentage figures from the baseline year (July 2004 – June 2005) to the most current performance data (July 2006 – June 2007) indicates an almost 63% rise in the percentage of exits to finalized adoption. This is a much higher positive performance gradient of change even by comparison to California's overall state performance change of 11.64%.

Programs and initiatives that have influenced the positive trend include Concurrent Planning, Team Decision Making (TDM), the practice of full disclosure and family finding, as well as the Adoption Promotion Support Services program (described in Section III under Service Array). The Older Youth Adoption Project, which has the goal of achieving increased adoptions for children 9 yrs and older, is expected to increase permanency who are currently living under a permanent plan living arrangement (PPLA). Further, In February 2004, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services consolidated our approach to recruiting, training and assessing prospective foster and adoptive families. Now, all potential resource families experience the same application process and training (PS-MAPP), and are assessed in their ability to support reunification, as well as to provide permanence if necessary before any child is placed in their care.

Prior to consolidation, families interested in caring for a foster child were required to be licensed by the State of California and approved by DCFS, which included completing MAPP classes and a family assessment. Once a child was placed in the home it could take from 6 to 18 months before adoption was identified as the permanent plan for the child. Furthermore, it could take up to an additional 15 months to complete an adoptive home study, which included duplication of paperwork that was required in order to be licensed and approved for foster care.

This consolidated approach to recruiting and assessing families was developed to reduce the length of time a child is in foster care and is able to reach permanence. This is accomplished by:

- Preparing all families to become resource families
- Reducing the duplication of paperwork and interviews for families
- Assisting all families in meeting the CDSS Adoption Regulations for placement of a child
- Thoroughly addressing issues that may affect child safety and well being prior to a child being placed in the home

Challenges:

Some of the challenges related to discharging children to finalized adoption within 24 months include hesitation by some relatives to adopt children of their kin, the child's particular special needs which might be challenging for the relative to fulfill and the nature of adoption study process which is generally lengthy and time consuming. Other resource related issues also result in delayed exits to finalized adoption. For example, distance of the resource family from the home/community of the child, issues with child/parent visitation, issues with court orders, and improper court notices for the .26 hearing.

Measure C3.1: Exits to Permanency (24 Months in Care): How effective is DCFS in providing permanency for youth who have been in foster care for at least 24 months?

DCFS has seen a decline in performance on this measure during the past three fiscal years, as the percent of all children in foster care for at least 24 months who were able to achieve permanency slipped from 19.6% in FY 2004-2005 to 18.6% in FY 2005-2006, and then down to 17.7% during FY 2006-2007. However, it should be noted that the number of children in long-term foster care decreased by 9.4% in 2006 and an additional 10.8% in 2007. It is likely that the children that are remaining in foster care are having greater difficulty achieving permanency due to having special needs and challenges, which may be why we are seeing a reduction in permanency for these children.

Even though children that have been in foster care for longer periods of time face greater challenges in obtaining permanency, DCFS has instituted the P3 program (which has already been described in Section II), the older youth adoption program, and more recently the permanency planning units in order to achieve improved success for this population.

Some regional offices utilize the Regional Permanency Review Team (RPRT) meeting as a way to address permanency issues for children. The RPRT is a multidisciplinary team of child welfare, mental health and education professionals who meet on a weekly basis to review long-term foster care cases for the purpose of developing a plan to provide permanency for children in Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (formerly long-term foster care). The team strives to return children home to a parent or place children into adoptive or guardianship homes. This process is designed to identify the unmet permanency and mental health and educational needs of children. At the conclusion of each case presentation, the RPRT team develops a concrete but simple plan that specifies action steps, responsible parties and expected action completion dates--all for the purpose of filling gaps in services, meeting existing service needs, and moving children toward

In addition, the multi-year back log of relative and non-relative (ASFA) assessments has significantly reduced. The number of incomplete relative assessments/re-assessments has been dramatically reduced from 3,215 in December, 2006, to 152 in December, 2007. It is hoped that having approved relative homes will help achieve permanence for those youth placed with kin, as they can then be free to pursue legal guardianship or adoption.

Lastly, some regional offices have staff specifically assigned to conduct Family Finding activities, such as the Metro North and Pomona offices. For instance, the Pomona DCFS implemented the Family Finder Initiative, which involves two Adoption Assistant workers conducting US Searches for families of children who do not have an identified permanent plan. Similar to P-3 workers, Family Finders will be works with front-end staff to identify missing biological parents and relatives early on in the case. This affords staff the opportunity to explore additional placements and facilitate alternative permanent plans if reunification is not successful.

Measures C4.1, C4.2, and C4.3: Placement Stability: How effective is DCFS with providing placement stability for children in foster care?

Los Angeles County's performance in minimizing placement changes for children in foster care is above the National Standard Goal for two out of the three Placement Stability measures (Measures C4.1 and C4.2), and above the statewide performance level in all three Placement Stability measures (Measures C4.1, C4.2, and C4.3). For children who are in foster care for up to 12 months, 87.1% experience two or less placements. For those in foster care anywhere from 12 to 24 months, 71.8% experience two or less placements. However, when children are in foster care for at least 24 months, only 39.9% experience two or less placements. Thus, the longer a child stays in foster care, the greater his or her chances are of experiencing a greater number of placement disruptions.

Placement Stability and Ethnicity:

CWS/CMS data for FY 2006-07 indicates that the majority (above 80%) of DCFS children of all ethnicities had two or fewer placements when in foster care for no more than 12 months. African American children constituted the largest percentage of children (15%) with two or more placements, followed by children of Hispanic origin (12.6%). Eleven percent of Caucasian children had two or more placements within the fiscal years while 9.5% of Native Americans and 9.1% of Asian/Pacific Islander children experienced two or more placements. Comparison to FY 2004-05 data for the same measure indicates that Native American children had the largest percentage of two or more placement (20%) followed by African American (14%), and Hispanic children (10.7%) while 10.3% of Asian/Pacific Islander children had two or more placements. Overall, comparing the above figures for FY 2004-05 vs. FY 2006-07, there is a decrease in the percentage of White, Asian, and Native American children experiencing more than two placements while there is a slight increase of such incidence for Hispanic and African American children.

Placement Stability and Age of Child:

Younger children are more likely to experience placement stability. For FY 2006-2007, 92.1% of 0-1 yr. olds, 88.5% of 1-2 yr. olds, 88.2% of 3-5 yr. olds, 88.1% of 6-10 yr. olds, 82.7 of 11-15 yr. olds, and 79.8% of 16-17 yr. olds experienced two or less placements when their stay in foster care lasted 12 months or less.

DCFS Policy and programs/initiatives such as Family to Family, Point of Engagement, and Team Decision Making all help to strengthen placement stability, as all promote the practice of placing children in the least restrictive, most family-like setting that is suitable to meet the child's needs, located within the child's community of origin if possible, and provides permanency for the child if Family Reunification is unsuccessful.

If the non-custodial parent is unable to care for the child and there are no appropriate relative/non-related extended family member placements available, CWS/CMS is utilized by the DCFS Technical Assistant to search for and to locate an appropriate placement based on the description that the social worker provides regarding the child's needs. CWS/CMS, via the Licensing Information System (LIS), has the ability to provide vacancy information on out-of-home care facilities. Characteristics of the child are matched to the acceptance criteria of the facility to produce the best match between the child and the placement facility. Upon receipt of the CWS/CMS printout of the placement options that are available to the child, the social worker reviews the options

and contacts each facility to provide specific information about the child, until an appropriate placement is located.

The Placement and Recruitment Unit - the unit responsible for identifying adoptive homes for unattached children - is to be contacted by the social worker to locate a placement when:

- A child meets the requirement for Fast Track to Permanency
- An infant is Safely Surrendered
- A parent voluntarily relinquishes parental rights
- A child is age three or younger and cannot be placed with siblings or a relative/non-extended relative caregiver

The Family to Family Initiative supports placement stability through the Placement Move TDMs as well as through one of its core strategies, the Recruitment, Development, and Support of Resource (RDS) Families. The Annie E. Casey Foundation and DCFS has hosted RDS Convenings, where resource parents, DCFS staff, and community partners have gathered to develop regional office workplans to improve the recruitment and support of caregivers. The Family to Family regional anchor site workgroups meet to implement the ideas and suggestions that have been shared during such convenings. Some of the suggestions from the convenings have been implemented, such as the creation of resource parent support forums, and greater support for the foster parent associations. However, caregivers still need respite care services and crisis intervention services that are available during and after regular business hours in order to assist them with the more challenging

The purpose of Placement Move TDMs is to preserve the child's placement, if it is safe and appropriate to do so. During the Placement Move TDMs, the child's critical needs are discussed, along with a description of the services that have been provided and an assessment of what is needed to stabilize the placement. The caregiver, youth (age 10 and older), current service providers, and family supports are invited to provide information as to the child's functioning in school, the community, and placement. Concerning behaviors and the mental health of the child is discussed to determine if there are any safety factors present that must be resolved. During the Placement TDM, the caregiver's capability to meet the child's needs are also addressed; if so, additional supports and services are put in place in order to maintain the placement; if not, then a decision is made as to whether the child needs to be moved to a different level of care.

The use of Placement Move TDMs jumped from 585 in 2005 to 1,777 in 2007, a 203.8% increase. Of all the referrals for TDMs that are received, 17% are for Placement Move

TDMs. The immediate outcomes for Placement Move TDMs are quite successful in preserving placements. For instance, for all of the 2007 Placement Move TDMs that were held, 60.4% of the placements were saved, 10.1% resulted in a change to a less restrictive placement , 14.5% resulted in a change to the same level of placement, and 9% resulted in a change to a higher level of care.

Children who participate in the Wraparound program benefit by working with family supports, DCFS and the community in order to ensure permanency and stability. Wraparound provides an alternative to higher end congregate care placement settings and is intended to reduce the numbers of children and youth placed in these types of setting. In a study conducted in 2005, 52 children who graduated from Wraparound were compared to 52 children who were randomly selected from a pool of DCFS youth that ended in RCL 12 or above in 2004. Results of the comparison indicate that the children who graduated from Wraparound were 36 times less likely to have another placement episode than those in the RCL 12 or above.

Concurrent planning is also being used in an effort to increase placement stability as well. By utilizing this practice, the likelihood of children being placed with a caregiver who may provide permanence through adoption or guardianship is increased.

The implementation of MAT assists in placement stability by providing comprehensive information regarding the child's behaviors and/or needs that may affect placement. The MAT provides initial health, mental health, developmental and education assessment for children who were detained by the court.

Also, foster homes are currently being licensed to be foster and adoptive homes (fost/adopt homes) so that in the event that reunification does not occur, the foster home that the child is placed in has already been approved and licensed as an adoptive home.

In addition, caregivers are given many training opportunities that provide the education and information that they need to care for a child's most critical needs. Please refer to Section III/Systemic Factors, in the Resource Parent Licensing, Training and Support section for detailed information on the training and support that DCFS provides to caregivers.

Challenges:

- Resource parents report that there are some significant type of services that they need to assist them with providing care to children and youth – most notably, respite care services as well as crisis intervention services that are available after business hours and on the weekends. There is also concern that social workers are unable to

respond to their need for additional support due to their high caseload and/or lack of responsiveness from some social workers.

- Stakeholders report that many resource parents are unaware of Wraparound Services, Kinship Support Services, and other current resources that may be available to them to help provide consistent, stable care for the children.

Measure 2B: Timely Responses to Immediate and 10 Day Referrals: How effective is DCFS in responding to incoming reports of child maltreatment in a timely manner?

DCFS has maintained a 97% compliance rate for responding to those child protection referrals that require an immediate response and a 96% compliance rate for responding to referrals that require a 10-day response. While there has been a very slight decrease in performance on both of these measures (-0.3% and -0.7%, respectively), L.A. County still performs above the statewide level.

DCFS Supervisors, managers, and staff are able to track and monitor compliance with responding to referrals via the availability of this real time data on the DCFS intranet website, The Site. Having this data posted online serves as a mechanism for quality assurance and is utilized as a management tool.

In addition, the implementation of SDM is believed to promote a uniform practice of assessing safety, risk, and needs which allows DCFS to improve response timeliness.

The implementation of Alternative Response (a.k.a. Differential Response) Services assists families by providing services without the involvement of the Department. This focus on early intervention and community partnerships strengthens families and reduces the likelihood of future referrals, which, in turn, decreases the number of repeat referrals that social workers must respond to, allowing for faster response times.

Stakeholders noted that a promising practice is that non-emergency calls directed to the Child Protection Hotline are forwarded to the County's warm line for advice and possible resource referral. Referrals that warrant face-to-face investigations, based on the SDM results, are assigned geographically so that timely investigations are conducted and referrals for preventative and rehabilitative services within the local community are utilized. In addition, child abuse referrals are investigated by front line ER workers who specialize in handling such investigations and understand the needs and resource issues of the clientele in the particular community

One of the challenges to responding to referrals in a timely manner is caused by social worker turnover, which affects the workload of the remaining social workers, which then in turn affects their ability to respond to referrals within the expected timeframe. Also,

during the past three fiscal periods, referral rates have increased by 3.7%. Further, L.A. County is a very large county, and it can be difficult at times to locate families, especially when new housing developments are not mapped. Also, it is a challenge to manage the travel time due to heavily congested traffic and long distances.

Measure 4A: Sibling Placement: How effective is DCFS in placing sibling groups together?

DCFS has made significant improvement in placing sibling groups together in foster care. DCFS showed continuous improvement with placing some or all siblings together, going from 66.2% of some or all siblings placed together to 69.7% of some or all siblings placed together during the past three fiscal periods. There was also steady increase in the percent of sibling groups that were ALL placed together, going from 41.2% in FY 2004-2005 to 46.6% in FY 2006-2007. The larger the sibling group, the less likely they are to be placed all together due to lack of placement resources that can accommodate larger sibling groups. Below is a chart that shows the percent of siblings placed together by the size of the sibling group:

Number of Siblings in Family	Placements with All Siblings				Placements with All or Some Siblings			
	04	05	06	07	04	05	06	07
July								
Two	58	59.9	60.7	62.4	58	59.9	60.7	62.4
Three	43.3	44.9	46.4	47.9	67.6	68.9	70	71.6
Four	32.2	32.2	33.8	37.3	71.6	73.5	74.2	76.2
Five	21.5	25.3	25.6	20.9	74.1	75.5	76.3	77.8
Six	10.6	14.1	13.3	12.8	73.6	76.4	76.1	73.9
2+	41.2	43.4	44.8	46.6	66.2	67.8	68.5	69.7

DCFS takes diligent efforts to place siblings together in out-of-home care, unless it has been determined that such placement is not in the best interests of one or more siblings. DCFS policy states that whenever a sibling group is in jeopardy of being placed in out-of-home care, asking the parent(s) whether (s)he wants to involve his or her faith-based practitioner or other community-support person to assess whether community supports and/or resources can be used to either ameliorate the need for the out-of-home placement or to assist in locating a community-based placement.

When considering placement of siblings in out-of-home care, protocol mandates that the ER Worker speak to each child and explore his/her feelings about being placed with the identified sibling(s). The ER Worker is to obtain information as to whether or not the siblings were raised together in the same home, and whether or not the siblings have shared significant common experiences or have a close and strong bond. In addition, the ER Worker's interview with each child must include questioning regarding his or her desire to live or visit with the sibling(s), as the social worker needs to determine whether or not ongoing contact is in the child's best emotional interests. The ER Worker assesses each child's responses and preferences to determine a child's placement needs. Also, a TDM would be in order whenever placement is being considered.

Other protocols that support the placement of siblings together include the social worker obtaining a CWS/CMS Client Search on the child to locate siblings who may also be receiving DCFS services. If a sibling is identified as having another social worker, the placing worker is to discuss possible sibling placement with the other CSW providing services to a sibling. If a sibling is in an adoptive placement, the placing social worker contacts the assigned Adoption social worker or the Adoption Liaison and requests permission for the regional social worker to contact the family to explore the possibility of placing the child in their home, if appropriate.

If the siblings are not able to reside together in foster care, the ER Worker or the case-carrying worker must establish a schedule for sibling contact, unless the court has ordered otherwise. The sibling contact and visitation schedule is to be incorporated into the case plan and report the visitation plan in the applicable court report.

Caregivers are reminded by the social worker, as well as through training, that it is their responsibility to promote and encourage contact between siblings whenever appropriate.

Even though siblings are placed in separate foster homes, the social worker has the duty to continue to explore options to place siblings together unless it has been determined that such placement is not in the best interests of one or more of the siblings.

The greatest challenge to placing sibling groups together, especially larger sibling groups, is finding foster homes that are able and willing to provide care for large groups, especially when one or more of the children have serious emotional, behavioral, or developmental challenges. Additionally, licensing requirements may limit the number of children allowed to be in one home.

To address some of these challenges, Family to Family's core strategy of developing resource families in communities is being incorporated into Departmental recruitment efforts, which includes campaigning for the need of foster homes who can accept sibling

groups. The recruitment division also has a committee that works specifically on addressing the challenges of placing sibling groups together.

Measure 4B: Placement Type: How effective is DCFS in placing children in the least restrictive, most family-like setting?

DCFS is pleased to report that more and more children are being placed with relatives, going from 34.7% in FY 2004-2005 to 40.7% in FY 2006-2007 being in relative placements. It should be noted that DCFS is performing well above the statewide level on this measure. There is also good news for the amount of children being placed in group homes, as this number has decreased by 23.7% since FY 2004-2005, going from 7.6 percent of our youth living in group homes to 5.8% during FY 2006-2007. Again, our performance on this measure is better than statewide performance.

Our most current data (July 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007) for initial placements by proximity shows that 298 children were placed in the same office service coverage area while 1,229 children were placed outside the office coverage area. This translates to 11.6% of children experiencing their initial placement within the office catchment area while 47.9% of children being placed outside the office catchment area. However, as stated, data trends show that more children are being placed with their relatives.

Children of various ethnicity experienced proportional percentage rate of placement within and outside the office catchment area. 51% of Hispanic children were placed from office area to office area while 64.2% experienced initial placement from office area to outside office area. 31.9% African American children were placed in the same office catchment area while 21.1% of African American children were placed outside the office catchment area. 14.8% of Caucasian children were placed within the office catchment area while 12% experienced placement outside the office catchment area.

2.3% of Asian/Pacific Islander children were placed within the office catchment while 2.2% experienced an initial placement outside the office catchment area.

Measure 4E: How effective is DCFS in placing ICWA eligible children in culturally appropriate foster care settings, as defined by ICWA?

DCFS has seen a reduction in relative placements for ICWA eligible children, as there has been a 25.7% decrease from FY 04-05 in relative placements. There has also been a 28.2% increase in ICWA eligible children being placed in non-related, non-Indian care provider homes.

Stakeholders reported that DCFS is working with ICWA eligible clients, including the provision of specialized services through the Native American Unit. However due to the relative lack of large number of reservations and tribes in Los Angeles County and the

resulting shortage of Native American foster care providers, Los Angeles County is not having as much impact. The lack of tribes with the mission of advocating for children in the system is resulting in some kids falling between the cracks.

Measure 8A: Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood (includes both DCFS and Probation Youth). How effective are the agencies in providing transitional services to youth?

The Independent Living Program is a federally funded program that offers supplemental and linkage services and/or direct funds for DCFS/Probation foster youth or former foster youth. Youth 16 to 20 years old are eligible for ILP services if they were in foster care at any time from their 16th to 19th birthday. Youth are eligible for ILP services up to their 21st birthday provided one of the following criteria is met:

- Were/are in foster care at any time from their 16th to their 19th birthday. This does not include youth placed in detention facilities, locked facilities, forestry camps, training schools, facilities that are primarily for the detention of youth who are adjudicated delinquent, medical and psychiatric facilities, voluntary placements, wraparound program participants, youth placed pursuant to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and guardianship placements in which the youth is not a dependent of the court;
- Were/are 16 years of age up to 18 years of age and in receipt of the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (KinGap) assistance.

As youth transition out of childhood and begin to enter the stage of emerging adulthood, they need a different level of support, skills training and guidance. During the FY 2006-2007, DCFS/Probation provided independent living services to 9,357 youths between the ages of 16-20, who resided in out of home care. The youth who participate in ILP services receive training and referrals for transitional housing programs, federal, state, and local housing programs; and assistance with landlord/tenant issues. Of these youths, 1,037 (11%) received subsidized housing upon exiting out of home care.

DCFS/Probation provides educational services, including skill development, assistance and referral to obtain literacy skills, high school diploma/GED, post-secondary education, experiential learning and computer skills. Out of the 9,357 youth that received ILP services, there were 1,789 (19%) who obtained their high school/GED diploma and 939 (10%) who completed two (2) year community colleges and 371 (3%) youth who went on to four (4) year universities. In the area of vocational training, 478 (5%) youth successfully completed this goal. Probation statistics for FY 2006-2007 tracked approximately 1,997 probation youth transitioning to self-sufficient adulthood and who have accessed Independent Living Services. Of the 1,997 probation youth, 48

have completed high school, 88 have enrolled in college/higher education and 86 have enrolled in Vocational Training.

DCFS/Probation provides foster care youth with career development and financial resources through Job Corps, the military, and/ or Employment Development Department. Of those participating in ILP services, 119 (1%) youth transitioned into Job Corps, the Military, and/or California Conservation Corps.

Both Departments make great efforts to assist youth, who have been in out-of-home placement for six months or longer, in maintaining significant relationships with individuals who are important to them. During the past few years, approximately 1400 foster youth have been matched with mentors from 39 group home placements and Foster Family Agencies, under a partnership between those placements and the Mentoring Partnership for L.A.'s Youth (mPLAY), a mentor recruiting and training community agency. This program provides adult support for youth, ages 17-19, who are transitioning out of the foster care system. These mentorships provide long term connections, job shadowing, academic support and guidance. Through multiple recruitment efforts, approximately 40 mentors have been successfully matched with youth through Bridges to the Future, a program started by a partnership between the Los Angeles Bar Association, DCFS and Probation. There are another 40 potential mentors scheduled for training.

Currently, DCFS and Probation are contracting with two community agencies to provide mentors to 800 foster youth. These programs will target DCFS youth, 10 y/o and older, who have been in foster care for at least two years and Probation youth, 16 years and older who are not scheduled for reunification with their families. The program is scheduled to begin July 1, 2008.

Permanency Partners Program (P3): This initiative helps find legally permanent homes and adult connections for older youth age 12-18. P3 has worked to pair a Permanency Partner (a specially trained part-time Children Social Worker) with a youth to identify one or more adult connections with the primary goal of reunifying the youth with family. If reunification is not feasible, legal permanent plans of adoption and legal guardianship are explored. Currently, there are 74 P3 Children Social Workers and 12 P3 Supervising Children Social Workers.

Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP): This initiative is for youth between 16 to 18 years old and are on target for high school graduation; doing well both in school and in their current placement; sufficiently responsible to share an apartment with a roommate; enrolled in the Independent Living Program (ILP); able to follow the rules and guidelines of THPP; and be under the current supervision of DCFS or Probation in out-of-home placement. This program has the capacity to house 120 youth per year.

Transitional Housing Program (THP) for Homeless Young People provides housing and supportive services to emancipated foster youth age 18 through 22 years old who are

homeless or may potentially become homeless due to living in temporary unstable housing, and who have no other housing options (youth must be admitted to the program before her/his 22nd birthday). The capacity for this program is 244 beds. The youth reside in one and two-bedroom apartments that are located throughout Los Angeles County. Probation has experienced a high success rate with this program.

Homeless Prevention Initiative (HPI): The initiative is designed to assist former foster youth ages 18 to 25 and for ILP Youth ages 18 to 21 years old. The funding is strictly provided for youth in the Los Angeles County area. The program began in Fall 2007 and the number of DCFS clients served is less than 25 to date. Program staff expects to serve 50 youth during calendar year 2007 and 100 youth during the fiscal year 2007-2008. Of the 164 Probation youth who initially sought these services, 108 emancipated youth were provided with rental assistance. Of those, 69 have maintained employment, 71 reported having their High School Diploma or GED and 60 are parenting or pregnant. As of March 2008, Probation has spent a total of \$397,369.00 on rental assistance.

Transitional Housing Placement Plus Program: The THP Plus Program has been operational since May 2007 and serves youth between 18 to 24 years old. There are currently 48 beds available in this program, but it will be expanded to 100 beds during FY 08-09. Participants are emancipated (DCFS/Probation) youth who are at risk of homelessness and meet at least one of the following criteria: History of substance abuse, multiple placements, previous involvement with the Juvenile Justice System, no high school diploma or GED, lack of family support, learning disabilities, little or no attachment to the labor force, and pregnant or parenting teen.

Youth Development Services Partnership (YDSP): This program was formerly known as the Emancipation Program Partnership. YDSP is a monthly collaborative partnership convened by the CEO and co-chaired by DCFS and Probation, Partners include the Commission for Children and Families, Juvenile Court judges, Children's Law Center, Public Counsel, The Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA), DPSS, DMH, foster parent representative(s), Casey Family Program, YDS-Ombudsman and United Friends of the Children.

Youth Transition Action Teams (YTAT): This initiative includes community linkages/collaboration with Work Force Investment Agencies (WIA), both City and County, to ensure DCFS/Probation foster youth have access to job training and employment opportunities via One-Stop and Work Source Centers. This collaboration assists in improving partnerships with LAUSD, Casey Family Services, community based organizations, and faith-based organizations. As a result of YTAT efforts, quarterly meetings are held with LAUSD to improve upon each of agency's role and responsibilities.

Finally, the YTAT program consultant is also the consultant for the Department of Labor (DOL) Foster Youth Demonstration Project. This project is a collaborative funding grant initiated by DOL and Casey Family Program and serves 100 youth annually. Services include intensive case management, peer support/mentoring and job training and job placement. Casey Family has agreed to fund a three-year program outcome evaluation.

One Stop Centers: One-Stop Career Center System is a statewide network of conveniently located centers that provide employment, education, and training services all at one location. Certain One-Stop Career Centers are all inclusive having employment, training, education partners and educational programs on-site, while others have only selected partners and programs on-site. The centers include programs such as Job Services, Unemployment Insurance, Vocational Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Youth services. Some of the One-Stop Career Centers are referred to as "kiosks". These kiosk locations are usually self-service and have no staff available for assistance. Regardless of the type of One-Stop Career Center that is visited, all related services and/or information are available through that location.

One-Stop Career Centers were established and maintained as part of the local community. They are conveniently located and provide a wealth of information and assistance for job seekers, education and training seekers, and employers. All members of the community, including persons with disabilities and persons with limited English-speaking ability, are welcome to use the One-Stop Career Centers. A county-by-county listing of all California One-Stop Career Centers including addresses, phone numbers, and hours of operation are available through the ILP website that was created for foster youth by DCFS.

Section IV:



SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Systemic Factor #1: Management Information Systems

For DCFS, CWS/CMS is a result of Chapter 1294, Statutes of 1989, Senate Bill 370. SB 370 required the development of a statewide computer system to automate the functions of county child welfare offices. The CWS/CMS system automates many of the tasks that county workers had to perform routinely and often manually. CWS/CMS allows for a centralized statewide system that allows State or county child welfare workers to share information on child abuse cases.

CWS/CMS is capable of tracking the children's location, demographics and permanency goals for all children in foster care and their families. The system is used at every level of the child welfare system. The CWS/CMS application provides critical information for timely child welfare intervention and case management. County and statewide data is available to child welfare administrators to support program management, budgeting and quality assurance activities.

The CWS/CMS application provides the following benefits:

- Provides child welfare staff with immediate access to child, family, and case-specific information needed to make good and timely case decisions.
- Provides child welfare staff with current and accurate information to effectively and efficiently manage caseloads and to take appropriate and timely case management actions.
- Provides State and county administrators with the information needed to monitor and evaluate the achievement of program goals and to administer programs.
- Providing State and county child welfare agencies with a common database and definition of information from which to evaluate child welfare services.
- Consolidating the collection and reporting of information for child welfare programs pursuant to State and federal requirements.

CWS/CMS is the primary vehicle to obtain child welfare services data in Los Angeles County, but it continues to have ever more limited ability to provide the data needed to support county programs and initiatives and social work best practice and to track and monitor key outcomes. By its very design, CWS/CMS is not able to reliably track initiatives, program outcomes, strategies etc. In many instances, there are no data fields in CWS/CMS that could be consistently tracked and evaluated to provide outcome data. In other cases, there may be such a data field, but if the data entry is not mandatory, the data will be incomplete and therefore not reliable.

Since CWS/CMS was implemented, the Special Projects page has been used in an attempt to collect data that had no other "home." The Special Projects data set is limited to the start date and end date and name of the service. This is not sufficient

to track factual information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of a program.

In addition to structural limitations of the aging CWS/CMS system, the LA County DCFS hardware and software needs continue to strain under the growing databases (currently maintains Development, Test and Production environments). The current APD process, by which our county requests funds for needed information system hardware and software, often takes a year or more for approval (*if* approved). Thus when we do become aware of a critical need and complete and send off the APD, the problem continues to compound, and often the situation, which created the need for the original request, has changed by the time the request is approved (or denied).

Over the last several years, DCFS has designed, developed and implemented a wide variety of web-based applications and reports to support the administration of child welfare services and the total business needs. Some of the key web-based applications necessary to collect additional data elements not in CWS/CMS to provide better monitoring of caseload and to track programs and initiatives are as follows:

- MyCSW is a web based application that allows the Children's Social Workers (CSWs) to organize their day to day case activities and view their caseload geographically. It provides the CSWs a view of caseload summary and child client details such as history abstracts on referrals, cases and Foster Care placements and payments. It makes available the case alerts for upcoming and overdue activities for Case Plans, Court Reports, Child and Parent Contacts, Medical and Dental Visits. It gives the CSWs the ability to create personal reminders and communicate with other CSWs through the Forum. This application is available to all Primary workers in CWS/CMS that includes both front-end workers (Emergency Response Workers) and back-end workers (Generic, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, Permanency Placement and Adoption Workers).
- MySCSW is a web-based tool for Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) providing a uniform way of monitoring their unit activities and assisting CSW needs through alerts and reports. MySCSW provides the supervisor with CSW information and certain critical alert messages and allows the SCSW to monitor contact activities with children and families, and to determine the best child to worker match based on proximity of a child's geographical location using GIS technology. MySCSW also shares the Live Forum component allowing communication with colleagues and subordinates.
- CPPL (Concurrent Planning Permanency Log) facilitates the social worker, supervisor, Dependency Investigator and Permanency Planning Liaison to monitor child cases for important progress toward concurrent and permanency planning activities. It serves as a task and event timeline tracking application for child welfare services permanency planning activities as required by ACF via the Productivity

Improvement Plan (PIP).

- ES/ILP (Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program) tracks ES/ILP services to eligible youth age 14 and above including those who have emancipated. The system facilitates ES/ILP coordinators with a means to record and track all departmental ES/ILP services rendered to youths. Helps emancipated youth avail themselves of services and resources provided by DCFS. Data used to develop outcome measures derived from the various data elements provided within the application. CWS/CMS to complete pending finalization of ACF outcome measures.
- Family Centered Services is used to refer families for specialized services provided under the Family Preservation, Alternative Response and Partnership for Family programs and produces the request for Auxiliary Funds. These programs are made available to prevent or limit unnecessary placement of children in out-of-home foster care. In addition, community-based service providers use this system to create monthly billing invoices to request payment from the County for services rendered.
- Foster Care Search Engine is a web-based application that uses the GIS technology in providing the Social Workers and Technical Assistants the ability to search for foster homes with vacancy closest to the originating address from which the child was removed.

In an attempt to monitor and track usage of CWS/CMS, DCFS developed and implemented the CWS/CMS Utilization and SDM Utilization Reports to monitor the compliance of social workers and their supervisors in entering significant information timely in CWS/CMS that includes Case Plans, Child Contacts, Parent Contacts, CHDP Medical and Dental, TILP, Referral dispositions and closures and SDM's Hotline Tools, Safety and Risk Assessment, Initial Family Strength and Needs Assessment and Case Re-assessment. It also tracks the timeliness of supervisor approvals. These reports extract the information from the CWS/CMS County Access Data (CAD) database and from the SDM database.

DCFS has converted all reports into web-based reporting using ASP, and, most recently, COGNOS the Business Intelligence software, which is the enterprise solution for reporting in LA County.

DCFS has also used GIS technology as a tool to determine referral assignments to regional offices and law enforcement agencies; detect the hot spots for referrals and removals; identify location of children in-home and out-of home; relate census population, poverty level and income level with the children and family we serve and identify ethnic disproportionality and disparity in caseloads.

Since the full implementation of CWS/CMS in 1998, DCFS has established the LA County CWS/CMS County Access to Data (CAD) database. DCFS receives daily

transactions from the State CWS/CMS center and updates the DCFS CAD. A subset of tables from the CAD database is maintained in the DCFS Datamart, which supports the various applications and reports in production. DCFS has set up and maintains three Datamart environments (Development, Test and Production) for a more efficient and effective development process.

Despite the limitations in our data systems and data collection and tracking processes, Los Angeles County DCFS does diligently endeavor to double and triple check its data to ensure the most reliable and accurate data possible. Staff does a very thorough job of ensuring that data is published internally and externally and is as consistent, current, accurate and reliable as possible, given the constraints of CWS/CMS as a data collection and data-tracking tool.

For the Probation Department, the Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS) was implemented in 2002. It is the main juvenile case management system for tracking youth on probation. Although it is an excellent case management tool for case documentation and providing specific reports regarding certain case activities, it is limited in collecting, sorting, and analyzing data into meaningful and accurate reports and statistics. However, JCMS will be retired and replaced by a new enterprise case management system. The Probation Case Management System (PCMS) is scheduled for implementation sometime at the end of 2008. This system will include both adult and juvenile probation information, and the systems will be designed to provide information to the department's new data warehouse where information will be available to provide more comprehensive reports and information.

Other systems used to access information are:

- Juvenile Automated Index (JAI) is the Superior Court System that provides legal court case information, file information and prior arrest history.
- Probation Lite (Problite) is a DCFS front-end view to CWS/CMS and provides Probation a view-only option of minimal Client, Placement and Episode Information and DCFS case history. Information regarding past dependency history is required to be included in all probation detention reports at the point of intake. This legal mandate is the result of the passage of AB 575 (2000).
- ProbNet is the department's Intranet system.
- Assessments.Com is a vendor system where the Juvenile DPO completes the Los Angeles Risk & Resiliency Checklist (LARRC) assessment form.
- Lexis Nexis is a search engine that is routinely used in family finding efforts by the Placement Permanency and QA Unit.

In addition to the above systems, many Probation Officers are equipped with laptops and wireless connections so that they can work in the field and use their time more efficiently. They are also provided with Virtual Private Network (VPN) that gives them

the ability to connect from remote locations to all the above confidential systems.

However, this area of management information systems is one that needs continued improvement because the use of data is so crucial to measuring outcomes and improvements. Again, it must be noted that the Probation Department does not have the benefit of the statewide-automated system, CWS/CMS. In fact, a statewide automated case management system for California Probation Departments does not exist. Each county is responsible for developing its own data collection and case management systems. Many of the current systems require detailed research and manual calculations and must be improved to capture critical data in a sophisticated manner and provide analysis on outcomes for our youth and their families.

Another challenge and area needing improvement is the limitations of Problite. This system reveals at least 50% of our youth in the probation foster care system have a previous history with the dependency system. It would be beneficial for probation staff to have specific information regarding the treatment plan and permanency efforts accomplished during the time period that a youth was under dependency status. Problite does not provide detailed dependency information, which is necessary for the Probation Officers supervising foster care cases. In order to have more consistent delivery of services, it is critical for the Probation Department to have access to specific dependency information, available only through CWS/CMS.

In the absence of advanced systems to provide the necessary information needed to achieve successful outcomes, it is critical that departments can share information in a more effective manner. During the Peer Quality Case Reviews and the County Stakeholder meetings, there was expression that using the American Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) as a scapegoat and not fully understanding the Act are hindering collaboration for our youth. All departments and agencies must come to an agreement as to what data can be shared so that our foster youth needs are addressed and met.

Systemic Factor #2: Case Review System

For both DCFS and Probation, statutory and regulatory requirements for a written case plan have been in force in California since 1982 (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 16501.1). Since that time, the case plan requirements have been updated regularly and now exceed federal mandates.

California WIC, Sections 358.1, 706.5, 727.3, 366.1 and 366.3 require a written case plan for all open cases, whether voluntary or court-ordered, in-home or out-of-home. When the Juvenile Court has jurisdiction over the dependent child or ward, statutes require that the written case plan be part of the court report and submitted as evidence

into the record initially and updated at all six-month reviews or as service and/or permanency needs indicate. Compliance with court requirements ensures the timeliness and thoroughness of the case plan.

The federally required elements of the case plan are mandated in provisions of State law and regulations (WIC, Section 16501.1 and Manual of Policies and Procedures, Division 31 Section 31-205). These provisions emphasize that “the child's health and safety shall be the paramount concern” and require that the plan be based on the child and family's assessment. Required elements of the plan include:

- Specific goals and appropriate planned services to meet those goals;
- a description of services offered and provided to prevent removal of the child;
- a description of the planned frequency of child-parent contacts;
- provisions for the development and maintenance of sibling relationships;
- a schedule of social worker/probation placement officer contacts with the child, parents and the child's caregivers;
- a description of the parental participation in the development of the case plan;
- selection of a safe and appropriate placement that is least restrictive, most family like, in close proximity to the parental home whenever possible and best suited to meet the child's special needs and best interest;
- a summary of the health and educational records, status and needs of the child;
- when the goal is reunification, a description of the services provided concurrently to achieve legal permanency if reunification fails; and,
- a description of services needed to assist youth age 16 or older to make the transition from foster care to independent living (WIC, Section 366.3).

The initial and subsequent case plans are incorporated into the court reports and reviewed and considered by all parties such as the child's attorney, the mother's and father's attorneys and any court-appointed child advocate (WIC, Sections 358 and 358.1). The reasonableness and efficacy of the recommended services are reviewed and modified as needed, and the court may make any and all reasonable orders including enjoining service providers to coordinate and collaborate in service delivery (WIC, Section 362).

Assembly Bill 1412 (Chapter 640, Statutes of 2005) provides for a greater degree of participation by the child in the development of the case plan. A child's rights under

section 16001.9(a) include the right "...to be involved in the development of his or her case plan and plan for permanent placement..." and the right "...to review his or her own case plan and plan for permanent placement if he or she is 12 years of age or older and in a permanent placement, and to receive information about his or her out-of-home placement and case plan, including being told of changes to the plan." A provision was also added as section 16501.1(f)(12) requiring that in the development of the case plan a child "...be given a meaningful opportunity to participate in the development of the case plan ...(and) a child who is 12 years of age or older and in a permanent placement shall also be given the opportunity to review the case plan, sign the case plan, and receive a copy of the case plan."

General Case Planning and Review:

Processes and regulations are in place to ensure that State and federal requirements are met. Specifically, front-line managers and supervisors review and approve completed case plans within 30 days of the child's removal and monitor timely completion of the initial plan and subsequent updates.

Automated management reports allow the county supervisor and office manager to closely monitor each worker's progress in case plan completion and documentation. Use of quality assurance tools such as Safe Measures, Cognos, and other tools allow the county supervisor and the case worker to monitor their compliance with the initial case plan development and subsequent updates. Safe Measures shows that for 2007, case plan completion for all cases that required an approved case plan ranged from 71.2% to 74% compliance. Anywhere from 22.9% to 25% of those cases had a case plan missing or the case plan was expired, and anywhere from 2.9% to 4% of the cases had case plans with a pending approval status.

Probation's Permanency and Quality Assurance Unit uses two separate review tools to review all cases and monitor their compliance with the initial case plan development and subsequent updates. The data collected as to the rate of compliance is shared with the supervisors to determine where corrective action through training, enhanced supervision, etc., needs to be applied. Over the past couple months, approximately 30 new Placement Officers have been hired, and a departmental training will take place in May 2008 to ensure that all Placement Officers have the knowledge and resources to improve the compliance rate of case plans.

All Placement Officers conduct monthly visits with each child placed in a group home or a relative/non-relative home. The average number of Probation officer visits, as appropriate, per child in placement or with an active child welfare case is one time per month (each 30 day period). It must be noted here that although Probation's Placement Bureau had a large amount of placement officer vacancies for several months, the

compliance rate for monthly face-to-face visitation remained at 90% or higher, according to the PPQA database. This rate has stayed consistent even with the increased workload in the Placement Bureau.

The PQCR resulted in the following findings on the practice of case planning:

- Most of the selected sample cases indicated that there has been a case plan in effect and that the case plan was updated every six months.
- In the majority of the samples selected, parents and older children actively participated in the family's case plan. However, in timely reunification cases, parents and/or children participated 75% of the time while in cases without timely Family Reunification that participation rate was about 50%.
- In the majority of samples selected, the social worker/probation officer factored the family's strength and needs as part of the case plan.

Practices for Parent-Child-Youth Participation in Case Planning:

Team Decision Making meetings (TDMs) is mandatory for all potential removals and emergency placements. The use of TDMs have dramatically increased in L.A. County, going from 3,106 completed TDMs in 2005 to 12, 276 completed TDMs in 2007, a 295.2% increase. TDMs for placement moves and exits from placement are being utilized at an increasing rate as well even though it is not mandatory for CSWs to conduct these type of TDMs. Use of Placement Move TDMs jumped from 585 in 2005 to 1,777 in 2007, a 203.8% increase. And even more impressive was the increase of use for Exit from Placement TDMs, going from 299 in 2005 to 1,376 in 2007, a 360.2% increase. Of all the referrals for TDMs that are received, 61.6% are for Imminent Risk of Placement TDMs, 10.8% are for Emergency Placement TDMs, 17% are for Placement Move TDMs, and 10.7% are for Exit from Placement TDMs.

TDMs engage the family, their supports, and community representatives in creating a safety plan. One of the issues that is addressed during the TDM is whether or not placement is necessary; if it is, the TDM process ensures that the child is placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to the child's needs. Other critical issues that are discussed with the family are family and child strengths, needs, areas of concern, risk issues and safety factors. The family, their personal supports, community partners, and DCFS staff brainstorm about ideas that could help the safety and well-being of the child(ren). Other team meetings that have been implemented within L.A. County include Family Group Decision Making meetings and Emancipation Conferences, both of which also involve parents, children, extended family members, and community partners in the case planning process. In 2007, L.A. County completed 158 Family Group Decision Making Conferences and 574 Emancipation Conferences.

L.A. County is also hiring 14 additional TDM Facilitators so that Permanency Planning

Conferences can be held as well to assure that there is regular, collaborative case planning efforts every 6 months for children placed in group homes and children in foster care for two years or longer with no identified permanency resource.

Wraparound Services also utilizes a team approach to engage family in case planning, utilizing a family-centered, strength-based, needs-driven planning and service delivery process approach. It advocates for family-professional partnerships to ensure family voice, choice and ownership

The Family Preservation (FP) Program's Multidisciplinary Case Planning Committee (MCPC) meetings are comprised of a multidisciplinary personnel team which is formed by the Family Preservation agency to analyze and evaluate a family's functioning and to finalize and regularly assess the family's progress toward the goals and objective within the case plan, including the specific services to be provided. The MCPC is comprised of the network service providers and staff from DCFS, Probation, Health Services, Mental Health, Education and other agencies, as appropriate and as determined by CFPN lead agency staff. Meetings are face-to-face and occur at a location identified by the CFPN lead agency or convened telephonically, in emergency situations. A case plan formulated for each FPP family at the time of referral and updated every 75 days. It is developed at the initial MCPC meeting and includes input from the family, DCFS, Probation, Mental Health, medical assessors, schools, child care providers, the CFPN and other agency staff

L.A. County has implemented the Parents in Partnership program in four regional offices. This approach pairs parents who have successfully reunified with their children, with families who are newly involved in the child welfare system. The goal is to help parents navigate the system, learn how to advocate for themselves and help them become active participants in their case plan.

Safe Measures, Cognos, and other quality assurance tools are utilized to extract data from CWS/CMS. This information tracks initial and updated case plans throughout the life of the case and allows supervisors and social workers to monitor case plan compliance as well as track outcomes.

Probation also uses Wraparound Services and Family Preservation to enhance the Parent-Youth participation in case planning. In addition, the Department is using Evidence-Based practices, such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) to increase the timeliness towards reunification and maximize participation in the case planning process.

Challenges to Timely Development and Review of Case Plans

- For both DCFS and Probation, balancing workload, staffing issues and community

resource limitations create challenges to meeting case plan timelines.

- Probation lacks an automated system, and does not currently have access to the CWS/CMS system, to document a service plan which creates a void for data collection and monitoring.
- Lack of transportation, childcare or flexibility in working hours to meet with youth, Probation Officer, case manager and therapist for case planning purposes.
- Parents are sometimes reluctant to engage in case planning or to sign the initial case plan before the court sustains the allegations in the petition, which often delays the completion of the case plan in both in-home and foster care cases.
- Some parents are unable or unwilling to participate in their child's case plan activities. This factor is partly influenced by the fact that many parents work and are not available.
- The increasing number of youth in relative/non-relative care where parents are willingly not participating creates a lapse in case planning. Furthermore, group home care providers do not feel they have the authority to enforce relatives to participate in case planning.
- Parents are not involved in the educational planning of their children because they are either unmotivated to be involved, unavailable, or unaware of their educational rights to their child.
- Stakeholders report that parents do not have their rights and responsibilities explained to them, which impacts their involvement in the case planning process.

Caregiver's Notice and Right to Be Heard:

The child's current caregiver, which includes a foster parent, pre-adoptive parent, relative caregiver, and non-relative extended family member, is entitled to receive notice of, and have the opportunity to be heard at, specified hearings.

L.A. County policy states that the Children's Social Worker/Deputy Probation Officer shall provide notice to the current caregiver of any statutory review hearings, permanency hearings, WIC Section 366.26 hearings, and any disposition hearing in which the dispositional hearing is also serving as a permanency hearing pursuant to WIC Section 361.5 (f). Section 361.5 (f) refers to those instances where the court can order No Family Reunification Services at the disposition hearing.

The right to be heard includes the caregiver's right to submit written information to the court, which may be accomplished by using the JV-290, Judicial Council Caregiver Information Form, or by submitting a letter to court. The JV-290 allows a caregiver to

document information related to the current status of the child's medical, dental, general physical and emotional health, as well as the child's current education status, adjustment to his or her living arrangement, and other relevant information. The JV-290 INFO, Judicial Council Instruction Sheet for Caregiver Information Form, provides the caregiver with directions about how to complete and file the form with the court.

In addition to providing the required notice of specified hearings, at least 10 calendar days prior to each of those hearings, the CSW/DPO must also provide the current caregiver with:

- A summary of the recommendations for disposition of the hearing, including any recommended change in custody or status;
- JV-290, the Caregiver Information Form (revised October 1, 2007); and
- JV-290 INFO, the Instruction Sheet for Caregiver Information Form.

Most notices of hearing are required to be served more than 10 days prior to the hearing. Therefore, in order to ensure timely compliance with the 10-day requirements of Court Rule 5.534, the CSW shall include the summary of recommendations on the applicable notice of hearing form, and shall provide the JV-290 and the JV-290 INFO forms with that notice within the applicable notice timeframes.

Concurrent planning:

Now in Phase II, the Concurrent Planning Redesign (CPR) Initiative has been implemented in the following DCFS offices on the following dates: Lakewood - 3/21/05; Belvedere - 4/6/05; Glendora - 5/16/05; Compton - 6/1/05; San Fernando Valley - 6/27/05; Vermont Corridor - 5/30/06; Pomona - 6/12/06; West LA - 7/5/06; Santa Clarita - 7/31/06; Lancaster - 7/17/06; Pasadena - 11/1/06; Palmdale - 4/16/07; Metro North - 5/7/07; Wateridge - 5/29/07; Torrance - 6/11/07; and Santa Fe Springs - 6/25/07.

Concurrent Planning is a case management method that allows caseworkers to achieve the goal of permanence (family reunification, adoption or legal guardianship) more quickly. It emphasizes initiation and/or completion of permanency tasks, as soon as the child enters placement in order to resolve the child's temporary status without delay. Concurrent planning redefines worker success as achieving family reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship for the child as soon as possible.

Although Probation does not have a formal Concurrent Planning Redesign like DCFS, it is very much a priority and practice of the Department. Adoption and Legal Guardianship are new processes for Probation since there was no process in delinquency court previously. In November 2004, the first legal guardianship was completed in delinquency court, and in March 2006, the first adoption was completed in

delinquency court. There is now a process in place for probation to grant legal guardianships, terminate parental rights and finalize an adoption.

All Placement Officers' cases are reviewed to ensure that compliance for Concurrent Planning is met. Cases are referred to the Placement Permanency & Quality Assurance Unit (PPQA) by Placement Officers, Courts, Attorneys and DCFS. The PPQA Officer completes the Concurrent Planning Assessment (CPA) and works collaboratively with DCFS to begin working on a plan of legal guardianship or adoption should family reunification fail. There are many factors for older Probation youth that create a barrier for adoption as a concurrent or a permanent plan. Currently, there are 3 cases that are in the adoption process in delinquency court and another 46 cases being assessed for adoption and legal guardianship.

The provision of concurrent planning services benefits children and CSWs, as two different avenues are available towards the desired goal of timely legal permanence for children. Legal permanence is achieved when children are successfully reunified with their parent(s); however, in the event that reunification does not occur, DCFS simultaneously pursues adoption with a relative, Kin-GAP guardianship/legal guardianship with a relative, adoption by a non-relative, or legal guardianship with a non-relative in order to assure that the child has a stable and permanent caregiver. It is the goal of DCFS to have the child in the home that will provide the option of legal permanency as soon as possible, even if the court orders reunification services.

The practice of full-disclosure is in operation under the Concurrent Redesign Initiative. Parent(s) and caregivers are provided with information on concurrent planning and the need to identify an alternate permanent plan. The parent(s) and caregivers are told about the consequences that occur as a result of parental inability or unwillingness to resolve the issues that brought the child(ren) into the child welfare system. Policy and TDM practice ensures that concurrent planning issues are stated during the initial TDM, and that CSWs have an on-going discussion with the parent(s) regarding their progress in meeting their case plan goals and the consequent results during their monthly contacts.

Under the Concurrent Planning Redesign, CSWs are to carefully assess, on an ongoing basis, the prognosis for successful family reunification by looking at various factors, including parental efforts to comply with the case plan and court-ordered treatment programs, ability to incorporate information and skills learned from treatment programs, visitation efforts (e.g. the frequency, duration, consistency, quality of visits), history of substance abuse, prior involvement with DCFS, history of mental illness or disability, and criminal history.

If prognosis for reunification is poor, activation of the alternate permanent plan occurs

as early as possible, but no later than 30 days prior to the WIC 366.21 (e) hearing. The CSW completes an Initial Concurrent Planning Assessment (CPA), the tool that is used to address the identification of an alternative permanent plan. The case-carrying CSW initiates the CPA and the assigned Adoption CSW follows with a more comprehensive concurrent planning assessment and thereby completes the CPA. It should be noted that one of the goals of Concurrent Planning is to already have the child placed in a home that supports reunification but also willing and able to provide a permanent home if need be as soon as possible. Both the case carrying CSW and the Adoption CSW collaborate in the process of identifying/activating the alternative plan. Should there be a disagreement on the identified plan, staff employs the Team Decision Making process and follows the chain of command until there is a final recommendation. If the child is not yet placed with the recommended resource family, the CSW is to make every effort to place the child with the resource family as soon as possible.

The identification, search, and assessment of relatives and non-custodial parents as a placement resource begins when an Emergency Response (ER) worker investigates a referral and is considering the removal of a child from their home. The ER Worker is to request a Team Decision Making meeting when considering removal or immediately after an emergency placement. Before the TDM meeting, the ER worker and/or the TDM Facilitator/support staff contact (with parental approval), family members and persons of support to the family in order to invite them to attend the TDM. During the TDM meeting, the family and DCFS staff discuss possible permanency options should reunification fail.

To help with the identification of relatives, the Internet database search engine known as US Search is used in cases where staff is looking for relatives of the child as a potential permanency option. While this was not implemented solely as a result of the Concurrent Planning Redesign (CPR), it is a helpful tool in uncovering relatives' whereabouts that were previously not known.

When the Concurrent Planning Assessment (CPA) recommendation is Adoption, secondary CSWs require assignment to work on the alternative plan, in the event Family Reunification efforts do not succeed. Adoptions CSWs are assigned and responsible for all adoption related activities such as completion of the adoption home study or to work with the Placement and Recruitment Unit to identify a prospective adoptive family and assess the fit for the child. 366.26 DI's are assigned to take the lead on the 366.26 Court hearing – the process by which children is legally freed for purposes of adoption. The Adoption CSW maintains ongoing contact, as needed, with co-assigned DCFS staff to obtain input, address identified issues, questions, and problems, and discuss case planning ideas and recommendations. The Adoption CSW also contacts the prospective permanent caregiver and provides full disclosure and

other information, including concurrent planning issues, kinship issues, permanent plan options and their respective legal rights and responsibilities, funding issues, description of the adoptive home study process and the legal process associated with each permanent plan. In regards to the timelines for completion of the CPA, the case-carrying CSW is to complete their portion of the CPA no later than 65 days prior to the WIC 366.21e hearing and the case-carrying CSW's Supervisor has 5 days to review the CPA. The CPA is then routed to an Adoption CSW, who is expected to fully complete the CPA within 25 days of assignment, and their Supervisor is then to complete the review of the CPA within 5 days. These timeframes helps to assure that the activation of an alternate permanent plan occurs no later that 30 days prior to the WIC 366.21 (e) hearing.

If the CPA recommends against Terminating Parental Rights or legal guardianship with a relative, diligent efforts must be made to assess and address those barriers to seeking the most permanent plan, and those efforts must be thoroughly documented in the CPA, case plan and court report. If after diligent efforts to address any barriers to adoption and/or comprehensive information about the differences between adoption and legal guardianship have been provided to the relative caregiver, a relative may decide to provide and pursue legal guardianship.

For Fast-Track cases, the CPA is submitted by the ER Worker or Intensive Services Worker/case-carrying CSW (for 2-pen cases) within 5 business days of the detention hearing. The Adoption CSW then reviews the CPA within 5 business days of submission by the ER or ISW/case-carrying CSW.

In several of the Regional Offices a formal conference is scheduled for every referral to the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Team. This includes the Dependency Investigator, the Family Reunification CSW, and the Adoptions CSW (as well as all three SCSWs, in many cases) and the conference focuses on any potential issues to achieving legal freeing of the child at the subsequent 366.26 hearing. These TPR conferences were implemented originally in the Pomona office to follow the CPR protocols of conferencing between all CSWs to initiate efforts to alleviate concerns/potential barriers. In addition, the CP Redesign was developed and implemented to be fully integrated into the existing Points of Engagement (POE) initiative to provide a comprehensive service delivery system. The timeline for completion of the concurrent planning assessment (CPA) has been aligned with the POE teaming conferences, known as the Permanency Action Review Conferences (PARC) and the Multi-disciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) meetings, so that information gathering that takes place in those settings can be included as a part of the CPAs.

The Concurrent Planning Redesign is primarily an intra-agency initiative designed to

shift existing work flow in an effort to reduce timelines for children and families to achieving the most viable form of permanency. Dually-licensed FFAs have been collaborators in providing a consistent message to the pool of foster-adopt families about their role in supporting the Concurrent Planning protocols. FFAs have also been encouraged to become dually-licensed for both foster care and adoption, so if reunification with birth parents fails, the alternate plan of adoption can quickly result in an adoptive placement for those caregivers wishing to adopt. Also, education and information have been shared with these FFAs through the Adoption Consortium, which is a regular meeting of all dually-licensed FFAs and private adoption agencies that provide services in Los Angeles County. In addition, the Adoption Promotion Stability and Support (APSS) contracted providers have been providing individual and family therapy to clients to deal with clinical issues related to adoption and permanency planning.

Children's Social Workers and probation officers prepare progress reports for submission to the court at six month intervals following the dispositional hearing. The social worker and probation officer also makes recommendations to the court regarding the continuation of the case plan. These reports, along with any evidence presented by all other parties, such as the caregiver, service provider, and Court Appointed Special Advocate Volunteer, serve as the basis for the courts decisions to extend Family Reunification, return a child home to their parent or legal guardian, terminate parental rights, or change the permanency goals.

Challenges:

- Although clear statutory timeframes exist for dependency cases, at times, California's commitment to due process for parents in the child welfare system presents a challenge to meeting these timeframes. Though necessary to ensure the constitutional rights of the parties, court continuances are the principal barrier to meeting the timeframes. It is recognized that workload contributes to this issue.
- Delinquency court personnel have not been fully trained on adoption or legal guardianship proceedings creating challenges in communication with Probation Officers preparing those cases.
- The courts need training and guidance regarding clear adoption orders and permanency findings. There needs to be better communication between the courts and the CSW/DPO on matters related to removal findings, concurrent planning and permanency findings made at each hearing.
- Probate court is not being included in the discussion of care for our children as option to further permanency when proceedings cannot be handled in dependency

or delinquency.

- Better court assistance and intervention is needed to overcome barriers regarding sibling visits.
- Delinquency court personnel have not been fully trained on adoption or legal guardianship proceedings creating challenges in communication with Probation Officers preparing those cases. The court needs clear training and guidance regarding clear adoption orders and permanency findings. Courts need to be trained on communicating with CSW/DPO on matters relating to removal findings, concurrent planning, permanency findings made at each hearing. (probation wants to revise this bullet)
- Judges rely on timely and accurate reports from social workers to inform their decisions. When these reports are late or incomplete judges are unable to render decisions which delay the permanency process.
- When tribal involvement in court proceedings is not initiated early in cases, permanency can be delayed.
- Better court assistance is needed to overcome barriers regarding sibling visits

Promising Practices:

- According to L.A. County's outcomes, the median time to exit for adoption and reunification has been declining, indicating timely court review processes.
- Court is allowing children and youth to voice their opinions and speak up in pointing out their preferences on with whom they want to live.
- Judges are showing more interest in involvement with case plans and permanency planning. Delinquent court is involving parents much more in the child's case planning.
- JV290 gives parents the chance to submit a report to the court reporting to what extent they were included in the case plan.
- Removal TDMs are being used more frequently and involve including family in placement related decisions; TDMs engage the family in identifying strengths, needs, concerns, etc., which gives parents a voice and the right to be heard. TDMs incorporates the practice of full disclosure, family finding, and concurrent planning, while also introducing information on ASFA timelines and general processes of the child welfare system.

Court Structure/Relationship:

L.A. County's Dependency Courts, Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court, and the Antelope Valley Court, provide legal rulings for dependent children under DCFS supervision throughout Los Angeles County.

Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court consists of twenty-two courtrooms. Twenty are dependency calendar/trial courts. Department 413 also hears American Indian cases and Department 421 hears dependent children adoptions and independent, agency, stepparent and adult adoptions. Each courtroom is staffed with a bench officer, judicial assistant/court clerk, courtroom assistant, court reporter, social worker and a deputy sheriff.

Delinquency Court consists of 28 Courtrooms in 10 locations across the county. Department 271 was the pilot courtroom for the first legal guardianship and adoption; however, these cases are now being heard in several courtrooms. Although there are some challenges in completing these new practices in delinquency, the Bench Officers and Court Personnel have been instrumental in aiding Probation Officers to further their work in ensuring that every youth has a permanent plan. Department 203 handles mental health cases and provides special court orders and services to meet the needs of those youth. Department 265 conducts a "Think Tank" meeting once a month with various stakeholders and agencies to discuss urgent emerging issues from psychotropic medications to bullying and hate crimes on school campuses. Each courtroom is staffed very similar to dependency courtrooms with the exception of a social worker. There is a court officer in each courtroom, who is also a probation officer and represents the department.

Juvenile Court Services (JCS) provides intermediary services between DCFS and the Superior Court of California – Dependency Court system. Juvenile Court Services provides comprehensive court related services including entering all court results into CWS/CMS. Working in concert with regional DCFS offices and County Counsel, JCS ensures the provision of legal sufficiency and application of Federal and State laws in all court matters and cases. Court Liaison staffs provide legal support while the cases are being heard in the court rooms.

DCFS Juvenile Court Services and Dependency Court staff work together in a number of committees in order to improve services to children and families. For example, the Court Process Workgroup's purpose is to improve the court process; the Fatherhood Committee works on developing ways to better engage and involve fathers in their children's lives and the Legal Permanency committee addresses the barriers and challenges that the Court and DCFS face to achieving timely permanency for all children and youth.

The County Clerk's office of Dependency Court provided a "Continuance Analysis Report" that provides annual data on the number of continuances for each type of hearing and the reason for the continuances. For the calendar year of 2007, there were a total of 64,802 continuances. The top reasons for 2007 continuances were: 1) "Remains continued" (40.4%); 2) "Standard Continuance" (14.8%); 3) "Continued for a contested hearing" (10.3%); 4) "Courts Motion" (8%), and 5) "Supplemental Report Required" (4.3%).

Resources for Children and Parents at Court

- Located within Edmund D. Edelman's court is the "211 LA County Children's Court Project", whereby parents are able to go to one of two offices in order to receive referrals for service providers in the parent's own community.
- The juvenile Court's Shelter Care program is located within the Edelman Children's Court. Its purpose is to provide at-risk children with a safe, non-threatening and supportive environment in which they can engage in various activities while they await their court hearing. The shelter care program has activity areas for play, crafts, games, movies, music, video games and a library. There are also outdoor area activities, including a ball court, swings, gym set, picnic tables and grass. Many volunteers come to the Shelter Care program to offer educational type of activities and engage the children and youth in various projects. Children and youth, ages 4 to 18 years old and living in out of home care are able to receive shelter care services. The Shelter Care program services a daily average of 70-85 children. While visiting the Shelter Care program, children are provided with fundamental knowledge regarding what they will experience and can expect during the court process. They are also informed of their ability to ask questions and to communicate their needs to their attorney's, social workers and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA's). The Shelter Care also provides children and families with separate furnished rooms in the manner of a living or family room, to be used as a visiting room. The program also Conference rooms with tables and chairs are available for attorneys and others to confer with any child. About 650 interviews and visits are coordinated each month by the shelter care program so that children can visit with their family or interview with their attorney. Over 300 newly detained children in Shelter Care are photographed, with their photographs being placed in their legal court files and the Department's case record.
- Intake and Detention Control (IDC) staff assists Children's Social Workers in establishing legal counts and proper language of the law in court reports. IDC also manages the DCFS Child Abduction Program and represents DCFS on the inter-agency task force which is tasked with the recovery of abducted dependent children.

- The WIC 241.1 Unit monitors cases for Dependent Children whose cases come under Dependency and Delinquency (WIC 600) Court.
- Court Transportation Services serves about 1381 children a month who are placed in out of home care. Children are transported to court by skilled Transportation Workers and the children are supervised by experienced and trained childcare staff.
- Implemented in 2007, the Family Substance Abuse Treatment Program, otherwise known as Dependency Drug Court, uses a team approach to working with parents whose children have been detained by the Court. The team includes the child's parent, the Judge, the attorneys for the child and parent, County Counsel, a DCFS social worker, and substance abuse treatment providers. All families who are referred to "drug court" must agree to participate in a Family Substance Abuse Treatment Program (FSATP). The FSATP is a one-year treatment and testing program that can help parents get off and stay off drugs and/or alcohol to lead clean and sober lives. Thus, participation in this program increases the likelihood for parents to have a successful and timely reunification with their children.

Systemic Factor #3: Resource Parent Recruitment, Licensing and Retention:

Recruitment:

The populations specified for recruitment and retention for this fiscal period are for those children supervised by DCFS who are disproportionately represented and those with special needs. This focus will create opportunity to engage various community based entities, including faith-based organizations, the education, health, and public safety communities, as well as governmental organizations in order to address the need of permanence for children throughout the County of Los Angeles. Recruitment goals are designed to both increase public inquires on becoming resource and/or adoptive parents and the number of qualified candidates who attend recruitment orientations.

The Probation Department has not yet been able to move forward and develop a program in this area. However, there are continued efforts being made to develop strategies and gain resources, information and opportunities for Foster/Adoptive Parent education and recruitment for probation youth. As we have more youth cross over from DCFS to Probation, it is critical to build this resource within probation. One of the strategies is to work in close collaboration with DCFS to gain opportunities to develop this area for Probation Youth.

DCFS is diligent with instituting a rich variety of ways in which to recruit potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in L.A.

County. The following are examples of DCFS recruitment efforts:

- Community Booths – Face to face interaction with the public providing information to the need of permanence for children supervised by the Department of Children and Family Services
- Faith Based Events – Partnering with Faith Based Organizations for a more targeted/focused campaign for both general and child specific recruitment
- Media – Particularly radio spots with a specific demographic listening population. It is particularly effective in conjunction to promoting an upcoming event. Our Wednesday's Child segments on Fox 11 News results in regular calls.
- Heart Gallery – Our photo gallery of waiting child is used to draw in families and has been very effective in very public places such as shopping malls.
- Improved Customer Service – Retraining our staff to be more professional and courteous as well as doing follow up telephone calls to those who missed their scheduled orientation.
- Word of Mouth – This is still our most popular method of recruiting families. As our families have positive experiences with DCFS, they tell others.
- Orientations – Orientations are located county wide. Three-hour orientations are conducted by Community Care Licensing and the DCFS Resource Family Recruitment Section staff to disseminate information about licensing, adoption, and fostering. A minimum of 15 orientations are provided per month.

DCFS features children on various internet sites and receive between 30-50 adoption home studies on a monthly basis. All Placement and Recruitment Unit social workers are responsible to review these studies and generate matches with their waiting children. About 30 children that are older, part of a large sibling group, or have special medical needs are placed in out of state homes annually. DCFS funds the services needed to supervise the placement and finalization.

In 2007, 12, 464 calls were made to the Resource Parent Intake Line. There were 5,161 English speaking and 1,722 Spanish speaking potential foster and adoptive parents that registered to attend a Resource Parent Orientation Meeting. There were 2,736 English speaking and 1,034 Spanish speaking potential foster and adoptive parents that actually attended the orientation meetings.

SPAs 4, 5 and 6 appear to be the areas of the greatest need for resource families, as these are the communities in which there are high numbers of children being removed from their homes. These areas include those families who are most disproportionately

represented within DCFS and areas where qualified housing is becoming scarce.

Current resource families are partners with DCFS in recruiting additional foster and adoptive parents. The recruitment coordinators are in monthly contact with current resource parents glean information about Foster Parent Association meetings and functions. Current caregivers also attend the quarterly Recruitment Partnership Forum, where recruitment ideas are discussed and implemented. And, regional offices always include resource parents whenever a recruitment or support activity is being planned. Current resource parents are often invited to speak at recruitment and support events, and have hosted recruitment tables at conferences and other community events.

There is a need for placement resources both for temporary care and to provide permanent families for large sibling groups, teenagers, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth, and children with special medical needs.

The following is a list of recruitment activities that have been completed and are planned for the future:

Licensing:

Licensing standards are set forth in State statutes (CCR Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 9.5) and regulations (Community Care Facilities Act beginning with Section 1500 of the Health and Safety Code), specifically address the areas of safety, admissions policies, sanitation, and civil rights for foster family homes.

The following are the key licensing and approval requirements for all foster homes, including those for kin caregivers:

- All persons who operate, manage, or provide direct care services in a community care facility as stated in section 1522 of the Health and Safety Code, obtain a criminal record clearance.
- The caregiver qualifications must indicate the ability to provide appropriate care and supervision, knowledge of applicable laws and regulations, and maintenance of financial records.
- The physical environment must be clean, safe, sanitary and in good repair.
- The caregiver ensures that each child is accorded personal rights.

Prospective foster and adoptive parents are required to attend 33 hours of pre-service training to begin the family assessment (home study) process. The Permanency and Safety: Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting (PS-MAPP) training is an interactive group process that helps prospective caregivers learn if foster care or

adoption is the right choice for them. The PS-MAPP program requires a six-week commitment (twice weekly or two meetings on Saturday for six consecutive weeks). Each meeting is three hours in length and is co-lead by a DCFS social worker, a contract trainer, and a resource parent.

PS-MAPP is the first national preparation and selection program for resource parents based on federal legislation (Adoption and Safe Families Act) with input from resource parents from around the USA. Based on real families and real children, it has been field tested with hundreds of resource parents and was based upon the foundation of the MAPP program that was originally created by the Child Welfare Institute (CWI) in 1986.

PS-MAPP develops five abilities that are essential for resource parents to promote children's safety, permanence and well being.

- Foster and foster/adoptive parents will be able to meet the developmental and well-being needs of children and youth coming into foster care, or being adopted through foster care.
- Foster and foster/adoptive parents will be able to meet the safety needs of children and youth coming into foster care, or being adopted through foster care.
- Foster parents will be able to share parenting with a child's family.
- Foster parents will be able to support concurrent planning for permanency.
- Foster and foster/adoptive parents will be able to meet their family's needs in ways that assure a child's safety and well being.

PS-MAPP meetings are designed to mutually prepare, assess and make selection decisions with prospective resource families based upon the family's willingness, ability and commitment to develop and use five core abilities. Each individual learns specific critical skills, which are practiced during the training series. The focus on skills building assures that social workers can see the skills in action in order to document the skills in the family assessment/home study. More importantly, the social workers are trained to provide developmental feedback to prospective resource parents, so that the parents can actually learn new skills or determine for themselves that they are unable or unwilling to perform the essential required skills.

Since 2004, DCFS has completed 215 PS-MAPP group series and 3,166 participants have been trained.

For current adoptive parents, the Adoption and Permanency Resources Division sponsored conferences on adoption specific issues in 2006 and 2007.

On April 29, 2006, 125 participants attended the "A Family's Journey Through Adoption" Conference held at the Omni Hotel in Los Angeles, California. Workshops provided included:

- Adoption Assistance Payments/Subsidy
- Parental Rights and Special Education Related Services
- ADHD versus Bipolar Disorder
- Common Medical and Developmental Concerns for Young At Risk Children
- Parenting With a Purpose
- Seven Core Issues in Adoption
- Transracial Adoption Issues

On May 30, 2007, three hundred individuals were invited to attend the “Growing Together” conference held at the Crown Plaza/LAX Hotel in Los Angeles, California. Workshops provided included:

- Meeting Parenting Challenges in Adoption for Children with Prenatal Exposure
- Understanding and Supporting Adoption Related Loss
- Mental Health Issues in Adoption
- Characteristics of Successful Special Needs Adoptive Parents
- How to Parent Your Adopted Child
- Adoption: A Journey of Love, the Gift of Family (Keynote)

In February 2004, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services consolidated our approach to recruiting, training and assessing prospective foster and adoptive families. Now, all potential resource families experience the same application process and training (PS-MAPP), and are assessed in their ability to support reunification, as well as to provide permanence if necessary before any child is placed in their care.

Prior to consolidation, families interested in caring for a foster child were required to be licensed by the State of California and approved by DCFS, which included completing MAPP classes and a family assessment. Once a child was placed in the home it could take from 6 to 18 months before adoption was identified as the permanent plan for the child. Furthermore, it could take up to an additional 15 months to complete an adoptive home study, which included duplication of paperwork that was required in order to be licensed and approved for foster care.

This consolidated approach to recruiting and assessing families was developed to reduce the length of time a child is in foster care and is able to reach permanence. This is accomplished by:

- Preparing all families to become resource families;
- Reducing the duplication of paperwork and interviews for families;
- Assisting all families in meeting the CDSS Adoption Regulations for placement of a child;
- Thoroughly addressing issues that may affect child safety and well being prior to a

child being placed in the home.

The relative approval process employs the same standards used to license foster family homes. DCFS-supervised children and Probation-supervised youth can only be placed with relatives/ non-relative extended family members whose homes have met the regulatory requirements set forth in the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 9.5, Article 3, License/Approval Standards including other statutory and regulatory sections that it references. All probation cases placed with relatives are screened through the Foster Home Consultant Unit under the same regulatory requirements set forth for DCFS and are approved through DFCS for funding. In addition, Los Angeles County requires child safety gates in multi-level homes in which children 6 through 24 months are placed. Only child safety gates that carry the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) certification seal and meet ASTM safety standards are acceptable.

A child may be temporarily placed in the home of a relative or non-related extended family member up until the completion of the disposition hearing under certain circumstances. For temporary placements (i.e., immediate or emergency placement), CWS/CMS searches, CLETS and CACI clearances must be done immediately or, absent any extraordinary circumstances, during the first 23 hours following removal of the child on all relative and non-relative extended family members requesting placement. Such a temporary placement cannot occur unless the results of the CLETS are obtained and those results reveal no convictions (other than a minor traffic violation) and that the information obtained from searches of CWS/CMS and CACI have determined to not pose a risk to the child. A child may be temporarily placed in the home even when it has been determined that an individual has resided in another state in the past five years, pending the receipt of the information from the other state(s). Further, other adults living in the home and all persons having significant contact with the child must complete a Live-Scan as soon as possible, but no later than 10 calendar days from the day the child began residing in the home. In addition, children in the home over the age of 14 must have a Juvenile Automated Index (JAI) clearance if the social worker has reason to believe that (s)he has a criminal record. In addition, the social worker must complete a CLETS, CWS/CMS search and Live-Scan on any person over the age of 14 years living in the home if there is reason to believe that person may have a criminal record. Finally, the social worker must complete the initial in-home inspection, assess the prospective caregiver's ability to care for the child's needs, and obtain supervisor's approval before a temporary placement is made.

While children can be placed in a relative or non-related extended family member on a temporary basis, it is the sole responsibility of the DCFS Kinship Support Division to determine if a home can or cannot be ultimately approved. The Kinship Division must complete the home assessment within 30 days upon receipt of the Kinship Home

Assessment Request. A child cannot be formally placed or remain placed in a home that has not been approved by the Kinship Division. The Kinship Support Division works with regional staff to make every effort, when possible and appropriate, to approve the home of the relative or non-relative extended family member such as developing a Corrective Action Plans, Documented Alternative Plan and purchasing goods, to allow the child to safely remain in the home. A copy of the Title 22 standards is taken to the home to ensure that the caregiver and their home meet all these standards; the CSW orients the relative caregiver of such standards in-person and addresses all issues and questions that the caregiver may have. To ensure a child's safety in out-of-home care, L.A. County completes an annual reassessment of the relative and non-related extended family's home.

It should be noted that relative caregivers are encouraged to attend the PS-MAPP trainings as well as the Kinship Education, Preparation and Support (KEPS) trainings, although they are not mandated to do so. However, the assigned Kinship Division Children's Social Worker is required to go over a standardized kinship packet with the caregiver to assure that they understand the regulations for providing care for a child in out-of-home care.

One of the unresolved issues in regards to training for caregivers is the requirements needed for B, D, and F-rate homes. There are different schools of thought regarding the number of annual training hours required for a caregiver with B, D and F rate children in the home. One position is that the caregiver should meet the training requirements for each category of children separately and respectively. Under this scenario, one caregiver with those populations would be required to complete approximately 44 annual training hours as there are variances in the skill levels and intervention methods required for each category.

Another position is that a caregiver, regardless of the pay rate for the child(ren) in the home, would meet the annual requirements by completing just the 18 D rate renewal training hours. The contention being, this will meet the 12 renewal hours required by CCL and satisfy the F rate (12 hours) as well. Another issue is based on concerns that one training class can meet both D and F rate requirements, since one deals with emotional/psychological and the other deals strictly with a child's medical needs. For example, if a caregiver completes a 3 hour class that reportedly meets both the D and F rate training requirements, the caregiver would receive a full 3 hours credit for D, and a full 3 hours for F rate credit. A workgroup is currently trying to work on a resolution to this matter.

The DCFS Kinship Division completed approximately 5,173 reassessments, 5035 Initial assessments and 2,701 potential placements for 2007. It should also be noted that a multi-year back log of relative and non-relative (ASFA) assessments was significantly

reduced, resulting in a net County cost savings of nearly \$800,000 dollars monthly. In December, 2006, there were 3,215 incomplete relative assessments and re-assessments; by December of 2007, this number was down to 152.

Retention/Support of Resource Families:

DCFS has a Kinship Support Division that offers the following support services and resources that are available to relative caregivers:

Kinship Care Resource Centers: Services provided include information and referral, emergency assistance, respite and recreational, support groups, relative home assessments and approvals, relative caregiver training and other activities both for caregivers and children. The families served may have open child welfare service cases or the children may be at risk of entering the child welfare system.

Kinship Education, Preparation, & Support (KEPS): KEPS is a no-cost training program for formal kinship care providers in Los Angeles County. The Program strives to assist kinship care providers in, (a) Meeting the safety, emotional and developmental needs of the child(ren) placed in their care; (b) Learning how to work with local school systems and other educational resources; (c) Supporting adolescents in achieving successful emancipation; (d) Joining an ongoing informal social support network made up of relative caregivers; and, (e) Understanding "the DCFS System", including: ASFA guidelines, the approval process, the language and protocol of the Court process, concurrent planning and permanence.

Further, the DCFS regional offices have hosted several support meetings and trainings in their local areas as well as special recognition events for all our caregivers, where they were able to learn about the current resources available, current policy, and new initiatives. Local regional events also allowed caregivers to become familiar with various staff and their role in providing assistance to caregivers and the youth under their care.

In addition to the formalized training that resource families complete, DCFS sponsors conferences for resource families where they are able to take advantage of more learning opportunities and network amongst each other. Please refer to Section III, Systemic Factor #5: Staff/Provider Training, for further information on DCFS sponsored training events for caregivers.

Probation has approximately 150 youth placed with relative/non-relative caregivers. Although this is underserved population, the Foster Home Consultant Unit is making great strides in improving the service provided to these families. There has been a strong collaboration between Probation's Permanency Unit and the DCFS' Kinship Support Division. Probation's caregivers have been offered the opportunity of Kinship

Education and Preparation Services as well as other events coordinated to provide information, support and resources to caregivers. Probation participates in the various committees related to caregiver support including the relative Caregiver Committee and the Relative Caregiver Roundtables organized through the Children's Commission.

During one of the Self-Assessment Focus Groups that was held with Kinship providers on 7/23/07, caregivers agreed that Kinship Services were highly valued. As one participant stated: "Kinship services have really saved us. They provide total support and information...if it wasn't for them I don't know what I would do." They felt that there should be more than two Kinship Resource Centers in L.A. County to better serve all the relatives spread throughout the eight different service planning areas.

Relative caregivers also expressed during the focus group that social workers should have a packet of information regarding kinship support services whenever they place a child with a caregiver because a lot of caregivers are unaware of these services. Further, they felt that "there is a need for a warm-line for relative caregivers, to get in touch with the social worker in critical times". Caregivers expressed that it can be difficult to get a hold of the social worker and feel that social workers are burdened with a high caseload, which impacts their availability and responsiveness to caregivers.

Relative caregivers stated that Wraparound services were helpful as well, but that there needs to be even more services for special needs children. They also explained that caregivers need respite care, that "this is a true resource that all relatives really need". They also felt that they need more access to managers and meet with them on a quarterly basis to review current challenges and needs.

The Probation Department has not yet been able to move forward and develop a program in this area. However, there are continued efforts being made to develop strategies and gain resources, information and opportunities for Foster/Adoptive Parent education and recruitment for probation youth.

Systemic Factor #4: Quality Assurance System

Los Angeles County participates in California's Outcomes and Accountability System. The establishment of the Outcomes and Accountability Section assures that quality assurance operations are in place, in accordance with Assembly Bill 636, which mandated the development and implementation of a new Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability System that meets the IV-B Plan Quality Assurance System requirements. The Outcomes and Accountability Section of the Department was formally established in 2005 to assure that DCFS was in compliance with all quality assurance related activities related to the COAS.

The Probation Department also established the Placement Quality Assurance Unit in

response to the passage of AB636 in 2004. This unit ensures compliance with State and Federal Mandates for the Placement Bureau. This unit also participates with DCFS in ensuring that the key components of the Outcomes and Accountability System are in place, utilized and completed as appropriate for both departments.

Because of the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act, the county monitors, analyzes, and assesses whether or not there is improvement on outcome measures related to safety, permanence and well-being. The new accountability system is built on a continuously recurring three-year cycle of self-assessment, planning, implementation and review. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data is fundamental to this cycle. The quantitative data comes from the Child Welfare Services/Case management System, the statewide child welfare database. The qualitative data is drawn from reviews of individual cases within L.A. County. The key components of the Outcomes and Accountability System are:

- The use of quarterly county data reports. These reports contain a series of measures that provide indicators of key program outcomes, processes, and receipt of critical services. The reports are to track improvements in strategies established in the system improvement plan and to support continuous high performance in outcome areas. The outcome measures are consistent with federal CFSR measures and are used to track State and county performance over time. Quarterly county data reports are developed using data extracted by the State's SACWIS system (CWS/CMS) and are published by CDSS in partnership with the University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research. These data reports serve to increase public awareness of the local child welfare system and establish the county's accountability for improving outcomes for children and families.
- The peer quality case review (PQCR) provides opportunities for examining the county child welfare system through a focused area of social work practice. While the quantitative data provides integral, population-based information, the PQCR provides a rich and deep understanding of actual practices in the field. PQCR goes beyond the county self-assessment process by bringing in outside expertise, such as county child welfare, probation peers, and community stakeholders to shed light on the strengths and areas needing improvement of county child welfare service delivery and practices. It is an intensive examination of selected social work/probation practice areas aimed at improving the provision of child welfare services.
- The County Self Assessment (CSA), which is this report, is a multidisciplinary needs assessment which identifies county strengths and challenges, details the county's overall best practice, service delivery, and funding streams, and evaluates current needs of the county. The CSA emphasizes increased collaboration with local tribes, community-based organizations, courts, and the county probation department. The intent of the self-assessment is for the county to examine all program areas to determine the basis for their current level of performance and to help them identify

and remove barriers to improving performance. This includes using community-based groups to facilitate public input into the process. L.A. County conducts an assessment once every three years and is required to have the Board of Supervisor's approval.

- The county system improvement planning process incorporates the data that is collected through data reviews, case reviews, and self assessments and translates the understanding of this information into strategic planning for program improvement. Known as the System Improvement Plan (SIP), it is developed in partnership with the community and other county agencies. Another significant impact of this process is the forging of relationships with the larger community and the development of greater community understanding about what goes on inside the child welfare agency in its efforts to improve outcomes for children and families. Further engagement of the community in planning for the adoption of specific improvement strategies reinforces the importance to the child welfare agency of the input and perspective of other stakeholders in the child welfare system. The SIP is an operational agreement between the State and county. For those outcome indicators which the county performance is determined to be below the statewide standard, the SIP must include milestones, timeframes, and proposed improvement goals the county must achieve.

- The Safe Measures program provides State staff and county child welfare managers with an ability to identify specific areas needing improvement and the opportunity to identify specific cases not in compliance for the local agency. With Safe Measures, managing performance shifts from using data based on limited randomized samples, to an analysis of data from CWS/CMS for all cases in near real-time (reports are updated and refreshed twice each week). Among its many features, reports interactively display performance trends over time to gauge improvement and comparisons across the agency to determine consistency of service delivery. Social workers, supervisors, and managers connect with the data entered into CWS/CMS as they use the Safe Measures tool to identify problem cases before they turn into negative outcomes. For every report, Safe Measures drill-down display lists both compliant and non-compliant cases for each of the most recent 13 months. The user may investigate the service history of any listed case by simply clicking on a case to view a comprehensive, chronological summary of activities, plans and assessments. The case history is useful for routine case review as well as the PQCR process.

- DCFS' Bureau of Information Services provides a wealth of reports that helps managers monitor and track progress, including the Family to Family Quarterly Reports, the Monthly Executive Reports, and the Executive Committee Highlights Report. In addition, DCFS has an internal website, called LA Kids, that provides a multitude of reports that assist with quality assurance activities, including reports on: Family Maintenance cases open over 12 months, Family Reunification cases open over 18 months, Family Reunification daily reports, Family Maintenance daily reports, Sibling Placement, Case Plan Completions, Children in Group Homes,

Referrals over 30 days, Child Contact Completions, Parent Contact Completions, TILP reports, CHDP/Medical and Dental Reports, SDM Utilization, TDM reports, Kinship Assessment Tracking reports, and Geographical Information Reports.

- The Department also uses contractors to conduct special reports and evaluations on some of our programs. For instance, the Children's Research Center completes reports on Structured Decision Making, and the Children and Families Research Consortium conducted a study on Point of Engagement.
- Each month, the Executive Team Committee, which is comprised of the DCFS Director, Chief Deputy Director, Medical Director, and the 7 Deputy Directors, meets to discuss progress on the outcomes and the impact of initiatives and programs on those outcomes.
- Over 80% of the current DCFS social services contracts with providers utilize performance based outcome measures. Many of the outcomes are directly aligned with the current State and Federal standards/goals for children in out-of-home care. Additionally, the County has developed a framework for the monitoring of fiscal, programmatic and contractual requirements for all contracted service providers.
- Through a collaborative effort among DCFS, FFAs and Group Home providers, Performance Measures Task Groups (PMTGs) were created to develop performance measures, create operational definitions and refine data collection procedures in order to assess the quality of services provided by Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes. A 2006 report submitted by DCFS, FFA, and Group Home PMTGs summarized the performance-based scorecard results for calendar year 2006. The objectives of performance-based contracting and the resultant scorecards are to align providers around system goals, provide standards for accountability, identify areas for improvement in services, and promote best practices and cross-system collaboration. The agencies received scorecards that covered the core child welfare domains of child safety, permanency, and child well-being.

Challenges:

While DCFS participates in the COAS, DCFS does not have its own internal formalized system in place where qualitative data is collected on cases in order to provide regular, in-depth examinations of practice issues across the county. Collecting qualitative data on a systematic and standardized basis would allow DCFS to go beyond data analysis in order to help us identify problems in practice that is causing poor performance on outcome indicators. For example, a qualitative analysis for those cases that are re-entering the system can help us discover challenges in practice and possible causal factors or triggers for children re-entering the child welfare system. Planning is underway to pilot test a collection of qualitative data as part of DCFS' approach to evaluating the IV-E Waiver. Additionally, DCFS needs to have a process/standard in which plans of corrective and preventive actions are used to remedy performance gaps

that are seen during qualitative reviews.

Systemic Factor #5: Service Array

The Department of Children and Family Services has four Bureaus designed to oversee the extensive array of services that are provided to children and their families. Specialized services are also offered out of the Office of the Medical Director.

Service Assessment:

To assist the Department with determining what types of services are most needed, the SDM Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Family Strengths and Needs Assessment provides managers with information for improved planning and resource allocation. According to the Structured Decision Making in Child Welfare Services Report provided by the Children's Research Center (report period was January 1 – December 31, 2007), the most common type of alleged maltreatment was neglect (44.4%), followed by physical abuse (34.4%), substantial risk (29%), child at risk (26.4%), emotional abuse (23.3%), caregiver incapacity (9.5%), sexual abuse (9.5%), severe neglect (2.4%) and exploitation (0.3%). These maltreatment allegations were reported for 69,230 (99.9%) of 69,232 families assigned for an in-person response.

The latest SDM data also shows that for all of the safety assessments completed on families, 4,962 (7.7%) of the households were deemed unsafe and required the removal of at least one child; 12,587 (19.6%) of the households had at least one safety threat present that workers were able to address with in-home service interventions. In the remaining 46,722 (72.7%) investigations, no safety threats were identified and no interventions or services were required. The most common safety threats included child immediate needs not met (5.6%), domestic violence in the home (4.9%), failure to protect (4.9%), physical harm (4.9%), caregiver substance abuse (4.6%), sexual abuse suspected (3.4%), previous maltreatment (3.2%), followed by caregiver mental health impairment (2.7%), hazardous living conditions (2.3%), caregiver negative about child (1.1%), questionable explanation of child injury, (1.1%), and family refuses access to child (0.5%).

The SDM Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) is a structured instrument used to systematically identify the caregiver and child's strengths and needs in eight different domains, including substance abuse, mental health, and parenting skills. This type of information helps the Department determine what are the most common needs of the families and children that we serve, which then helps to determine what types of services need to be provided, created, or expanded upon. The latest SDM data shows

the areas of family functioning in which the family needs to address and improve (based on the 15,001 FSNA that were completed by social workers during the calendar year of 2007): Parenting skills (36.6%), substance abuse (27.1%), mental health/coping skills (22.7%), household relationships (17.4%), social support system (17.1%), resource management/basic needs (9.4%), physical health (3.3%), culture/community identity (1.7%), and other identified caregiver need (5.3%). Thirty-five percent of the FSNA resulted in no priority needs being reported. It should be noted that there has been a significant increase in the utilization of the FSNA tool, with a current utilization rate of 78% for the calendar year of 2007, which means that the majority of the families are having their needs assessed in a systematic manner.

The SDM Child Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) requires social workers to evaluate each child across nine different domains of functioning. Social workers completed CSNAs for 29,434 children between January 1 and December 31, 2007. Of those, 10,214 (34.7%) children were between 0 and 4 years old, 10,827 (36.8%) were between 5 and 11, and 8,393 (28.5%) children were between the ages of 12 and 17 years of age. Only .5% of children in the 0-4 age group exhibited delinquent behavior, while 2.7% of children in the 5-11 age group and 17.7% of children in the 12-17 age group displayed needs in this area. Educational needs also increase with the age of the child, with 1.4% of 0-4 year olds, 15.5% of 5-11 year olds, and 32.5% of 12-17 year olds showing concern in this area. The areas that required the most attention for intervention for 0-4 year olds were the quality of family relationships (9.8%), child development issues (7.1%), medical/physical issues (6.5%), as well as emotional/behavioral (4.9%) and peer/adult social relationships issues (4.1%). For 5-11 year olds, the areas that needed to be addressed were issues related to education (15.5%), family relationships (13.5%), emotional/behavioral challenges (11.8%), and quality of peer/adult social relationships (7.0%). And, finally, for 12-17 year olds, results show that the greatest areas of need are related to education (32.5%), family relationships (26.3%), emotional/behavioral challenges (22.1%), delinquent behavior (17.7%), peer/adult social relationships (13%), and substance abuse (6.8%).

In addition to SDM, family team meetings that are offered by Team Decision Making, Wraparound, Family Preservation, Family Group Decision Making, Emancipation Conferences, and Permanency Review meetings all offer the opportunity to thoroughly assess, with participation by the family and child, the particular services that will be needed. These processes provide the capability to design a more effective, realistic individualized case plan along with the family instead of merely prescribing a generic type of case plan.

Resource Development:

DCFS and its stakeholders agree that efforts are made to strengthen the service array

through a variety of public-private partnerships, most of which are described in **Appendix III** as well as in the “Agency Collaborations” section of this report.

Katie A. Class Action Lawsuit:

In 2002, a class action lawsuit was filed against the State and the County alleging that children in contact with the County’s foster care system were not receiving the mental health services to which they were entitled. In response to this finding, DCFS has been actively working jointly with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to address the mental health needs of children and youth in the foster care system. Significant funding was approved in August 2007 to implement phase 1 of the settlement agreement.

During fiscal year 07-08, DCFS and DMH will implement the following components of the court-ordered Enhanced Specialized Foster Care program Corrective Action Plan:

- An expanded and coordinated system for the screening, assessment, and provision of mental health services to children at risk of or have entered foster care;
- The creation of a Resource Management Process (RMP) to better match children’s needs and strengths with clinical services and appropriate placements;
- An expansion of intensive in-home mental health services (to be implemented in SPAs 1,6, and 7), Wraparound (which will be expanded by 500 slots) and Treatment Foster Care services, to be used as an alternative to group home care;
- Adding an additional HUB, bringing the total to seven;
- Newly developed systems to provide for better meeting the mental health needs of children placed with Foster Family Agencies;
- The creation of youth and family support teams to provide crisis stabilization services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in order to help prevent placement disruptions and provide support to caregivers;
- The promotion of new treatment models that employ the concepts and skills associated with evidence-based and other best practice models;

Title IV-E Waiver Capped Allocation Demonstration Project:

Participation in the Title IV-E Waiver will allow DCFS and Probation flexibility to re-invest IV-E funds to provide direct services based on each family’s individual needs so that children can remain safely with their families, can be reunified sooner, or an alternative permanency plan can be achieved in a timely manner. DCFS and stakeholders identified three types of services that will be initially implemented as a result of the waiver: 1) Expansion of Family Team Decision-Making Meetings, 2) Focused Family Finding and Engagement through Pilot Specialized Permanency Units in three regional offices, and 3) Up-front assessments on high risk cases for domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues.

Appendix III is a synopsis of our Department's programs, services, and partnerships (excluding the core services of Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, Permanent Placement, and Adoption Services) that are located throughout L.A. County.

Challenges:

- Stakeholders report that Full Service Partnership services are not being utilized by Probation and DCFS staff because they are not aware of the services. However, there is a belief that this program can help stabilize children in their own community.
- Stakeholders report that there is a lack of uniform resources in the DCFS regional offices and a disparity in services. The availability of services that are culturally matched to child and family are limited in many communities, and it is difficult to find a sufficient number of qualified bilingual staff.
- Many services for both Probation and DCFS are funded by short term grants or private funding and are not consistently available.
- Transportation is a challenge for many families, which makes service accessibility difficult.

Promising Practices:

- Various type of family team meetings engage family, youth, and the community in identifying strengths, needs, areas of concern, and goals in order to achieve child safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Case plans developed with families address the specific and unique issues of the children and the parents that contributed to the abuse and neglect and provide for the provision of services to address those issues.
- DCFS has DMH, DHS, and DPSS staff co-located in regional offices in order to provide an integrated service system. DMH, DHS, and DPSS staff participate in TDM meetings as needed in order to provide a multidisciplinary approach to case planning.
- In 2005, the Mental Health Services Act became law in California, which allows the county to develop and provide enhanced mental health services for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances.
- Funding to local communities through the California's First 5 has expanded services to families of children pre-birth through five years of age with a particular emphasis

on school readiness.

- As of October 1, 2007, DCFS has contracted with Shields for Families to provide up-front assessments for the Compton office, which serves a community that is scarce with resources and plagued by socio-economic hardships.
- The expansion, development, and creation of several programs is underway as a result of the implementation of the Title IV-E Waiver and the Enhanced Specialized Foster Care program Corrective Action Plan that resulted in response to the Katie A. class action lawsuit.
- Probation's use of Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) have had a positive impact on youth and their families.

Systemic Factor # 5: Staff/Provider Training

The primary mission of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Training Section is to train, support and equip DCFS/Probation employees at all levels to perform their specific roles and responsibilities more efficiently and effectively in the interest of achieving improved outcomes for children, families and communities. In conjunction with the DCFS Executive Team, Service and Support Bureaus, the Inter-University Consortium (IUC), and other training entities, the Training Section oversees/directs, designs and delivers a comprehensive array of training/learning experiences that integrate the theoretical and practical aspects of an employee's job to support improved practice. The Training Section also plays a key role in training/supporting and equipping resource family members through the provision of in-service training and provides leadership with other public/private stakeholders and providers to coordinate cross system and multi-disciplinary training as needed to improve service delivery. Finally, as directed by the DCFS Executive Team, the Training Section will play a key role in supporting the design/implementation of service innovations and new initiatives made possible through the approval of the Title IV-E Waiver.

The Training Program in our Department is comprised of 7 major categories: 1) Training in multiple categories and forms for 7,199 DCFS employees (support, staff, supervisors, managers, and executive level); 2) Preparatory training for clinical licensure (LCSW and MFT); 3) Stipend internships for MSWs and BSWs; 4) CWS/CMS and Office Automation training; 5) In-Service training for resource families; 6) Enhanced opportunities for cross system, inter-agency and community training, and 7) Conference Learning Events, Self-Directed Training Funds and Purchased Training Funds.

Provider Training:

To support resource families, the Department organizes in-service training events based on the following criteria/principles. All training should:

- Be aligned with Departmental priority outcomes: safety, permanence and wellbeing
- Support achieving State objectives for training.
- Maximize efficient and effective use of resources to support direct training and to insure the building and strengthening of the local community network to support of existing caregivers (relative and non-relative)
- Address of broader/shared needs as well as individual needs.
- Provide for cross system training and partnership to mutual alignment
- Reflect a strong direction of fairness and equity distribution of resources.
- Provide an array of resources/support training to allow individual needs to be met.
- Link resource family training to other major initiatives
- Provide for the individual assessment
- Be specific but allow for flexibility and means for input.
- Include means/resources for evaluation

The Department organizes, supports and provides ongoing training in coordination with local community colleges. DCFS sponsored training events include but are not limited to:

- Conferences for Resource Families;
- SPA-specific Resource Family Mini-Conferences
- SPA-specific In Service training.
- Relative Specific Conferences

Additionally, the Department provides access to funds/resources at the SPA/Office and local level to assist, support and retain resource families in their neighborhoods. At the local level, DCFS managers/staff will encourage active participation of resource families and community partners to determine caregiver training needs and how to meet them. Prior topics include but are not limited to: Establishing neighborhood training support groups; leadership development for resource families; effective communications with DCFS staff; community resource development and awareness; child advocacy, and community resource updates (e.g., newsletters, roundtables, etc.).

Training for Staff:

Training offered through the DCFS/IUC partnership supports and enhances the skills of Children's Social Workers, Supervising Children's Social Workers, Middle Managers, Executive and Senior Administrators, Support and other staff.

Core Academy training is provided to new social workers, new supervisors, new managers, new support staff, and new Revenue Enhancement staff in a separate training series to give them basic knowledge, skills, and values required to perform their

job. CSW and SCSW Core Trainings are held as needed based on hiring promotion patterns. For the last four fiscal years, the Training Section has averaged 10 CSW Cores (between 25-40 participants each) and 3 SCSW Core Trainings per year (with 30-40 participants each). These trainings are delivered/timed to hiring/promotion time frames. All new CSWs complete the CSW Core Academy prior to being assigned as a case-carrying social worker. Thereafter, CSWs participate in Core Enhancement Courses that are designed to be taken soon after they begin their work in order to facilitate more direct application. SCSWs complete, or at least commence, their SCSW Core Training within their first year as a SCSW.

The CSW Core Academy Training Curriculum includes the following areas of core practice: Public Child Welfare Framework, Human Development, Child Maltreatment and Neglect, Case Planning and Case Management, Placement and Permanency, Assessment of Safety/Risk and Protective Capacity. The curriculum will also seek to increase the social worker's knowledge, skill and values in the areas of: Strength-Based, Family Centered Practice, Fairness and Equity, Youth and Family Engagement, Outcomes/Evidence based practice, Minimum Sufficient Level of Care, Legal Issues, Allegation Findings, Individualized Service Plan and Intervention, Safety Planning, Concurrent Planning, Visitation, Re-assessment, Well-being and Education/Mental Health and Family Needs Assessment.

Other staff training that is provided includes:

Core Enhancement: Training classes are designed as a continuation of the training for newly hired/promoted staff building upon the Core classes. For new social workers, the Enhancement training classes are provided to staff during the first two years of employment. Employees receive more in-depth training and advanced training which utilizes their on the job experiences.

In-Service Training: Includes classes open to all staff with the intent of enhancing their knowledge, skills and values in various topics related to public child welfare practice.

Advanced Training: This training is provided to staff with over two years of experience and is designed to meet their needs for professional development in child welfare practice. Advanced training is provided to Children's Social Workers, Supervising Children's Social Workers and their Managers. Enhanced update and refresher training is provided to Revenue Enhancement staff to keep them abreast of changes in the legal and fiscal requirements of state and federal regulations.

Specialized In-Service: Training for Adoptions, Training Unit Supervisors, Hot Line, Command Post, Deaf Services, Public Health Nursing staff, and Revenue Enhancement staff is provided to relate to their specialized assignments and professional development

needs.

Specialized Sequences of Training: Provides opportunities to link key training classes together to support implementation of new programs and initiatives involving multiple modules and learning objectives.

Computer Software Training that includes Child Welfare Services/Case Management System: This training is office automation and CWS/CMS training for new staff in the CSW Core Academy, Support Staff Academy, and Revenue Enhancement Academy. It also is included in training provided to new social worker interns, to staff with specialized work functions, and to staff who need remedial training.

Management Learning Organization Group (LOG) Events: Provides large scale opportunities for staff and managers to gain shared and in-depth understanding of key issues and priority initiatives for the Department.

Cross Level and Cross System Trainings: Provides opportunities for staff from multiple levels and/or from other disciplines serving DCFS children to participate in joint training events.

Other Training Tools and Resources: This training is provided to meet the ongoing needs beyond new employee academies or specialized training, Office Automation training is available to all levels of DCFS staff. It includes classes with curricula tailored to meet DCFS needs at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of Microsoft Office including Windows 2000, Word 97, Outlook 2003, PowerPoint97, Excel 97, and Access 97.

This also involves the provision of E-Learning modules that support increased access to training for all staff, managers and supervisors and enhances their access to support knowledge for the ongoing job and skill practice/acquisition as refresher training. E-learning training ranges from video clips to full training modules. Access to E-learning training is via the internet and therefore is available anytime/anywhere to DCFS staff.

The Department also provides for other individualized training through the use/application of Self Directed Training Funds for represented staff (CSWs and SCSWS), and Purchased Training Funds for non-represented staff to attend specialized events and through the use/application of conferences to enhance learning.

Below is a chart that summarizes the high frequency of Trainee days provided, the great diversity of topics that are offered, as well as the large number of presentations given by DCFS and IUC throughout the past four years:

Trainee Days Provided – DCFS & IUC Combined			
2004	2005	2006	2007
16,762	14,860	15,142	16,540
Number of Different Topics Offered – DCFS & IUC Combined (excluding Core classes)			
FY 03-04	FY 04-05	FY 05-06	FY 06-07
187	161	163	158
Number of Presentations – DCFS & IUC Combined			
FY 03-04	FY 04-05	FY 05-06	FY 06-07
1,133	850	892	922

Training Evaluation:

The Training Section and its related training partners seek to maximize the use of evaluation to: Insure the acquisition of practice knowledge; strengthen skill-based training through the use of effective modeling, practice, feedback and coaching in both actual training environments and in the field; and strengthen the level of transfer/application of learning from training to practice.

On August 1, 2007, DCFS received from the IUC a CSW Core Academy Final Evaluation Report for 2006-2007. The IUC developed a range of methods for evaluating the training that is offered. All trainings are entered into the Training Data System for accountability and monitoring of deliverables. The IUC Training Data System (TDS) is the primary data management system used by the Consortium and DCFS and serves as the principal data source for coordinating and monitoring the performance of IUC/DCFS Training. The IUC assesses participant reactions to training in almost all the presentations, generally assessing satisfaction and trainees' perceptions of learning in the training and its applicability to their job. Assessment of knowledge learned by new workers in the CSW Core Academy has been conducted for many years. Starting in 2004, the IUC initiated the assessment of knowledge learned by staff in system-wide training.

Findings revealed that IUC trainings are well received by the trainees, as all training

evaluations scored near the top of the 1-5 rating scale (1 is defined as very poor and 5 is defined as very good). The average rating for each training and each dimension was calculated, with all results ranging from at least 4.15 to 4.94. These high ratings across all measures show that trainees are very satisfied with the quality and felt that they learned very well from the training offered.

IUC's performance assessment also included the administration of the Core Academy Proficiency Exam, which includes a pre-test on the first day of the Academy, and then a post-test on the final day of the Academy. The test includes 82 multiple-choice items that cover content from most modules offered in the Core, including plain content items and questions eliciting judgement about the correct implications for assessment and practice based on vignettes. Results show that Core Academy trainees achieve notable gains in scores between Academy Pre-test and Post-test, as trainees generally answer only half (58%) of the questions correctly on the Academy Pre-test but by Post-test, they are able to accurately answer almost three-quarters (74%) of test items, which is a 15% gain on average.

For the Statewide Standardized Core Modules for (1) Safety, Risk and Protective Capacity, (2) Case Planning/Case Management, (3) Placement and Permanency, DCFS CSW Core trainees scored higher than statewide new workers at a statistically significant level. With CMI I, our trainees scored equal to statewide new workers, and results for CMI II and Child and Youth Development are too new to report. DCFS is obviously pleased with this result and also grateful to have a sound and continuously improving training evaluation system in place to capture this kind of information.

It is important to note that improving the quality and relevance of training is the primary purpose for collecting these data. Data from these evaluations are continually made available to DCFS, university centers, instructors, training coordinators, and in some instances, trainees. This feedback allows the training community to gauge the effectiveness of the training that is offered, and to develop plans for improvement.

The Probation Department has several layers of training that have been developed to serve the needs of its employees. The first is the standard training provided to meet the required 40 hours per year for every sworn employee working in the field offices or management; 24 hours per year for every sworn institution employee working in juvenile halls, camps or Dorothy Kirby Center. These trainings are conducted by outside vendors, Probation internal staff or independent contractors. The second is specialized training that is organized and conducted by each Bureau to meet the special needs of the employees that work within a special field or operation. The third is training that is organized and conducted when the Department sets forth a new initiative or practice such as the Title IV-E Waiver, Evidence-Based Practices or Strategic Planning. In addition to this, the Department organizes the State-mandated Juvenile Correctional

Officers CORE training for all new employees and any subsequent trainings required such as Field Probation Officer CORE training or Residential Treatment Services Bureau (RTSB) Academy. There are also specialized CORE trainings for Supervisors and Managers upon their promotion.

The Placement Bureau and Placement Permanency & Quality Assurance Unit provide training specifically related to Outcomes and Accountability for our youth and families in the areas of Safety, Well-Being and Permanency. Due to the last System Improvement Plan, Probation has been able to access specialized training through DCFS for a limited amount of employees. Furthermore, UC Davis has been a resource that has been used to enhance skills while equipping Placement Officers and managers in case planning practices and permanency.

The Needs/Challenges of Training:

- Insuring consistent understanding/differentiation between training needs/solutions and performance accountability issues with staff.
- Linking integrating multiple initiatives and programs in a coherent way that supports outcome achievement.
- Engaging multiple community partners and creating effective collaborative training ventures in such a way that common and specialized needs are met, especially for resource parents who are providing care for special needs children.
- Balancing the needs/challenges in insuring consistent practice across the County while also responding to local tailored needs for training.

Promising Practices:

- Increased use of alternative modalities for training including office, unit-based formats and E-Learning;
- Increasing partnership through the use of specific training/coaching tools and supports (The recently approved DCFS Portfolio and Training Guide serves as an example);
- Increased Level II evaluation data;
- The shift to a County Based Learning Management System to assist in tracking, posting and reporting on training;
- Increased numbers of work groups with direct line and community partner input into training design and delivery;

- Probation has offered improved and job-specific training to its employees. Also, there is training available on-line via Probnnet, probation's Intranet system.

Systemic Factor #4: Agency Collaborations

In an effort to deliver appropriate services to families in the most beneficial manner, DCFS and Probation hosts and/or participates in a number of committees, workgroups, councils, forums, task forces, commissions, and special collaborative projects. Representation is broad and inclusive of a rich variety of stakeholders, including, but not limited to: service providers, foster parents, adoptive parents, relative caregivers, birth parents, foster youth, public and private child and family service agencies, juvenile court staff, child welfare staff, county/city/state government officials, child welfare advocates, schools, other County departments, tribal representatives, faith-based community representatives, and law enforcement.

The feedback and concerns of stakeholders are critical to the development of DCFS and Probation policy, services, programs, initiatives, and projects. In an effort to involve and engage community partners, DCFS and Probation have facilitated a variety of means to promote the shared responsibility of planning, developing, and implementing child welfare activities with the larger community. With the implementation of the Family to Family Initiative came a surge of increased departmental efforts in building community partnerships for the purpose of meeting goals set forth under this child welfare reform initiative. DCFS regional offices have created and organized local community partnership forums, councils, committees, and workgroups where improved delivery of service mechanisms and opportunities are discussed and planned, and information on community resources, trends, and needs are shared. In addition, numerous Family to Family convenings have taken place during the past several years, where community partners have been invited to join DCFS in discussions surrounding the four core strategies of the initiative (Team Decision Making, Building Community Partners, Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families, and Self-Evaluation) while identifying the successes, challenges, and next steps that need to be taken to further implement such strategies. Inherent in the Family to Family Initiative is the need for child welfare agencies to be inclusive and open to community partners so that they have shared knowledge, influence, and responsibility on the availability, quality, and type of services offered to children and families.

During the planning process for the Title IV-E Waiver Capped Allocation Demonstration Project, regular meetings of longstanding work groups focused on Prevention, Family Reunification, Permanency, and a variety of meetings with local and interest-based stakeholder groups identified a list of priority initiatives based on needs assessment, child welfare outcomes, and the likelihood of seeing a positive impact within a relatively

short period of time.

DCFS and Probation also participate in a number of venues in which various groups come together for the common purpose of serving our most vulnerable children and their families. Below are some examples of such gatherings that provide evidence of DCFS' and Probation's effort to plan, coordinate, integrate, and improve services with other entities:

- **The Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council:** This is a countywide public/private collaborative that is dedicated to improving the lives of children and families by encouraging partnerships, promoting the use of data, developing resources and tools, and emphasizing the importance of outcomes. The goal is to build stronger and more effective systems that serve families and children, build linkages between government and community, and improve planning efforts. The Children's Planning Council has a council for each of the 8 service planning areas (SPAs) in L.A. County, and there is a DCFS representative in each of those eight SPA councils. In addition to the eight SPA councils, there is a ninth council called the American Indian Children's (AIC) Council. The SPA/AIC Councils represent and are linked to community-based organizations, neighborhood groups, cities, schools, county and city government agencies, and many other entities.
- **Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN):** Thirty two County, City, State, and Federal agency heads are members of the ICAN Policy Committee, along with the University of California, Los Angeles, five private sector members appointed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and the Children's Planning Council. ICAN serves as the official county body to coordinate the multi-agency development of services for the prevention, identification, prosecution and treatment of child abuse and neglect. ICAN strives to improve the lives of children and families at-risk and those served by child welfare through inter-disciplinary collaboration, program development, accountability, and advocacy.
- **Commission for Children and Families:** Includes a group of child advocates, appointed by the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, who are dedicated to working with DCFS to enhance the well being of children and families, and advises the Board in areas of child welfare and family policy.
- **DCFS Prevention Committee:** This committee is designed to bring together a comprehensive cross-section of internal and external stakeholders throughout the county to partner and collaborate on efforts to prevent child maltreatment countywide. (See a detailed description of the Prevention Initiative developed by this committee in Section V).

- California's Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care: The commission is a high-level, multi-disciplinary body providing leadership on the issues that face our foster children and their families and the courts and agencies that serve them. The commission's charge is to provide recommendations to the Judicial Council of California on ways the courts and their partners can improve safety, permanency, well-being, and fairness outcomes for children and families. The DCFS Director, Patricia Ploehn, is a member of this commission.
- Los Angeles County Adoption Consortium: DCFS Adoptions, DCFS Permanency Resources Division, Post Adoption Services, Adoption Promotion and Support Services, as well as adoption private agencies meet bimonthly to share and discuss adoption practices, adoption regulations, and recruitment efforts.
- Indian Child Welfare Task Force: American Indian Children's Council, the Native American Indian Commission and DCFS work together to establish a working partnership to recruit American Indian resource family homes.
- ICWA Committee: This is a committee of the Superior Court of the California Juvenile Division. Probation, DCFS, American Indian Organizations and Tribes, L.A. Dependency Lawyers, Office of the County Counsel, Department of Mental Health, District Attorney's office, California State University Los Angeles, American Indian Children's Council and the UCLA School of Law are participants of this committee that develops protocol to guide ICWA practice and improve ICWA compliance within the Juvenile Dependency and Delinquency systems.
- Sybil Brand Commission: This commission is charged with conducting onsite inspections of Group Homes where L.A. County DCFS and Probation Youth are placed in order to insure child safety. The DCFS Out-of-Home Care Management Division, Probation Department, Sheriff's Department, Auditor-Controller Program Audit Section, Department of Mental Health, and Community Care Licensing are members.
- Youth Development Services Partnership (YDSP): Formerly the Emancipation Program Partnership, YDSP is a monthly collaborative partnership convened by the CEO and co-chaired by DCFS and Probation. Partners include the Commission for Children and Families, Juvenile Court judges, Children's Law Center, Public Counsel, ACSHA, DPSS, DMH, foster parent representative(s), Casey Family Program, YDS-Ombudsman and United Friends of the Children.
- Youth Transition Action Teams (YTAT): This initiative includes community linkages/collaboration with Work Force Investment Agencies (WIA), both City and County, to ensure foster and Probation youth access to job training and employment

opportunities via One-Stop and Work Source Centers, improving partnerships with LAUSD, Casey Family Services, community based organizations, and faith-based organizations. As a result of YTAT efforts, quarterly meetings are held with LAUSD to improve upon each of agency's role and responsibilities.

- Department of Labor (DOL) Foster Youth Demonstration Project: The Project is a collaborative funding grant initiated by DOL and Casey Family Program. This Program serves 100 youth annually. Services include intensive case management, peer support/mentoring and job training and job placement. Casey Family has agreed to fund a three-year program outcome evaluation.
- Family to Family Anchor Sites: The Family to Family anchor sites host monthly community forums whereby a wide representation of community members are invited to discuss how DCFS and its community partners can work together in building community capacity and improving the service delivery system for children in foster care. Family to Family anchor sites also have established workgroups in order to develop plans to further implement strategies of this initiative (e.g., TDM, Building Community Partnerships, Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families, Evaluation, Parent Partners, etc.)
- Local Interagency Operations Network (LION): Provides a forum for ongoing communication among community stakeholders, countywide departments, parents, youth, and agencies providing Wraparound/Systems of Care services to improve knowledge and understanding of the strength-based programs and ensure that local outcomes are achieved.
- Project ABC Operations Committee: DCFS, DMH, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and Children's Institute International work collaboratively to increase the professional capacity to provide relationship-based infant mental health services and improve the coordination and accessibility of the services provided.
- The Education Coordinating council (ECC). Established by the Board of Supervisors in 2004, the 25 member ECC was designed to assist County Departments of Children and Family Services and Probation in partnering with the 81 school districts in Los Angeles county to improve educational outcomes for child welfare and probation youth. Directors Patricia Ploehn and Robert Taylor are members of the Council (www.educationcoordinatingcouncil.org)

Appendix IV, Agency Collaborations, provides additional examples of the rich variety of venues in which we engage and respond to stakeholder feedback and concerns.

Section IV:



County-Wide Prevention Activities and Strategies

The DCFS Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP):

The DCFS *Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP)* is a 12-month child abuse and neglect prevention demonstration project intended to create a comprehensive, strength-based, prevention system extending beyond County government – and beyond the jurisdiction of any one County department – by enhancing existing community-based networking systems.

The goal of the PIDP is to test a broad spectrum of services, resources and activities across diverse communities within Los Angeles County and evaluate their impacting child abuse and maltreatment. The evaluation results of these strategies will be used to: (1) determine their replicability/sustainability; (2) consider enhancements to the County's current service contracts that assist children and families (such as DCFS' Promoting Safe and Stable Families contracts); and (3) leverage additional funds to support and sustain the most effective aspects of the project.

The PIDP will be testing approaches that will prevent families from entering, re-entering and/or experiencing extended stays in the County's health and human services system by addressing root causes that weaken families and impede healthy childhood development, such as social isolation, lack of economic opportunities and little or no access to municipal services.

The PIDP will be implemented throughout the eight geographic Service Planning Areas (SPAs) via lead Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and their network of community-based partners and residents who will work directly with DCFS regional line offices and other County departments to achieve positive outcomes leading to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The contracted CBOs will assume the lead role (in partnership with DCFS offices) in identifying targeted (place-based) communities with high indicators of child abuse and neglect root causes and to implement family/neighborhood specific initiatives/strategies to reduce social isolation, supporting the development of an integrated continuum of services and supports, and promoting family financial stability. The initiatives/strategies will be targeting locations within each community where families at risk can be found, including schools, youth centers and child care facilities. The lead agencies and their networks will have the opportunity to enhance their current networking, as well as exploring leveraging opportunities for

expansion of services, resources, and activities needed by children and their families. *PIDP* families, both DCFS families and non-DCFS families, will have access to the full range of services, resources, and activities across the prevention spectrum.

DCFS designed the PIDP using a \$5 million fund balance from FY 2005-06 via a Request for Information (RFI) process initiated in May 2007. A total of \$4.75 million will be awarded to 8 contracted lead agencies for each of the 8 SPAs for the 12 month period. The remaining \$250,000 is reserved for project evaluation.

Lead agency funding will be utilized as follows:

- 50% aimed at fulfilling Healthier Community goals such as decreasing social isolation for vulnerable/fragile individuals/families who have not yet come to the attention of the department, thereby decreasing the number of children requiring intervention and supervision by DCFS.
- 30% aimed at fulfilling Stronger Families goals such as increasing community connections for families who come to the attention of DCFS and who choose supportive services on a voluntary basis, reducing the potential for repeat referrals that may lead to substantiated maltreatment.
- 20% aimed at fulfilling Thriving Children goals by providing preventive services and activities to families with substantiated cases of maltreatment, preventing further maltreatment and reducing the negative impact of maltreatment.

The County and DCFS (regional offices), with its CBO partners and their networks, will be able to develop, implement and evaluate placed-based and time-limited prevention strategies across the diverse communities which comprise LA County to see their impact on child abuse and maltreatment through a broad prevention spectrum of services, sources and activities. The evaluation results of these strategies will be used to: (1) determine their replicability/sustainability; (2) revisit and rethink its current service contracts (such as its Promoting Safe and Stable Families contracts) so as to incorporate the findings into future year contracting and (3) leverage additional funds to support and sustain the most effective aspects of the initiative.

Importance of DCFS addressing Primary Prevention

The Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project must address root causes that weaken families and communities, preventing healthy childhood development - such as poverty, joblessness, poor education, lack of affordable housing, community crime (including exposure to violence and domestic violence), lack of health and dental care, homelessness, substance abuse, social isolation and racism - in order to prevent family problems from becoming crises.

Prevention activities will respond to a broad array of neighborhood priorities identified by families, such as economic and social networks of kin and neighbors; rather than existing service systems or limited to specific service programs. The outcome will be that parenting and family support assistance programs will be accessible to families in their own communities.

The goal of the *PDIP* is for lead agencies and their network of community-based partners to work directly with DCFS regional line offices and other County departments to implement, evaluate and leverage resources around preventing child abuse/neglect. Prevention strategies should focus on reducing social isolation, supporting the development of an integrated continuum of services and supports, and promoting family financial stability to achieve positive outcomes leading to the prevention of child abuse/neglect, including preventing families from entering or re-entering the County's health and human services system. *PIDP* families, both DCFS families and non-DCFS families, will have access to the full range of services, resources, and activities across the prevention spectrum.

Evaluation Methodology and Approach

These will be “**place-based evaluations**” -- grounded in the needs and strengths of the local communities that will be the focus in each SPA. It is highly likely that the evaluation design will take the form of eight case studies (one for each SPA), with some common measurement areas across all eight SPAs such as the baseline CWS/CMS data, relationships between DCFS staff and CBOs, changes in the networks over time, family social support, and parent sense of connection to their local community.

The evaluation team will connect and coordinate with First 5 LA, which has already invested in evaluation methods and measures relevant to *PIDP*, and which is planning new investments in place-based evaluation in all 8 SPAs. The availability of First 5 resources would expand the evaluation options for this one year demonstration project. In addition, the group will link with LA's Title IV-E Waiver evaluation, the Neighborhood-based Prevention work in SPAs 6 and 8, and other similar efforts.

Evaluation data across the spectrum of prevention strategies will be obtained at critical time periods during the year and reported within two months after the 12-month demonstration period to serve several purposes. Early findings from the mid-year data collection will be analyzed quickly and shared to provide timely feedback to DCFS and the community networks. The evaluation will identify initiatives that are showing early results, as well as specific strategies that appear to be promising and could be replicated by departments in their ongoing service delivery and within *PIDP*. The evaluation will also inform continued development of the flexible strategies needed to implement the IV-E waiver and other DCFS child welfare reform efforts. DCFS will be

able to use the evaluation findings to determine how future DCFS contracted services and resources, such as the Family Support Services component of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program, can be delivered to directly sustain promising practices identified during the first year work of the *PIDP* from both a funding and a program delivery perspective. Finally, for the first time, DCFS will have systematic information on the resources leveraged through County investments, and the local funding partners interested in continuing partnerships.

Implementation Strategy of PIDP

The recommended actions are consistent with the principles of the Countywide Strategic Plan Goals 1 (Service Excellence) and 5 (Children and Families' Well-Being). The recommended actions are intended to improve the well-being of children and families in Los Angeles County as measured by the achievements in the five outcome areas adopted by the Board: 1) good health; 2) economic well-being; 3) safety and survival; 4) social and emotional well-being; and 5) educational/workforce readiness

Role of PIDP in garnering Interdepartmental support

The intent of the Prevention Initiative Demonstration is to create a comprehensive, strengths-based, child abuse and neglect prevention system extending beyond County government - and beyond the jurisdiction of any one County department - to keep children safe from harm and prevent families from entering or re-entering the County's health and human services system.

This project requires qualified agencies to work in partnership with families and communities, the public and private sector, across systems, agencies, the faith-based community and all related county departments (including, but not limited to, Child Support Services, Community and Senior Services, Community Development Commission/Housing Authority, Health/Public Health Services, Mental Health, Sheriff, Probation, Public Social Services and Office of Education).

In addition, the PIDP networks will work collaboratively with other key local government entities (i.e., cities and schools), with business, and with local community groups. Some of these partners will already have effective partnerships with other County departments, but new opportunities for collaboration may emerge for all participating County departments.

The Board approved the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project on February 26, 2008 and the CBOs/Offices are currently developing their plans for implementation.

Section V:



Summary Assessment

Summary Assessment

The purpose of this section of the report is to summarize the County's performance on each of the C-CFSR Outcomes considering the analysis of its performance on the related outcome indicators as well as the impact on any systemic factors.

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

Safety Outcome 1:

Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

The Department of Children and Family Services showed positive trends and outcomes in the percent of children who do not experience maltreatment while at home or in foster care. FY 2006-2007 data showed that 93.4% of children are free from repeat maltreatment during the 6 month period that followed the initial substantiated abuse report. While L.A. performs higher in this measure than the statewide level, DCFS has not met the National Standard Goal of 94.6%, but we are moving quite close to it. We did, however, surpass the National Standard Goal (99.68%) for the percent of children who do not experience maltreatment in foster care. L.A. data shows that 99.82% of our children were safe from maltreatment by a caregiver while in foster care.

DCFS Social Workers show a high compliance rate with providing timely responses to referrals that required an immediate response (97.2% compliance rate for FY 06-07) and those that required a 10-day response (96.6% compliance rate for FY 06-07). L.A. County performed better than the state as whole on both of these data indicators. In addition, there was a 91.7% compliance rate for completing timely home calls with children.

Other factors that influenced the positive trends in child safety include: 1) The increased use of SDM tools; 2) increased use of TDMs and other type of family meetings offered by Wraparound and Family Preservation; 3) the standardization of licensing requirements and the monitoring of foster homes, relative caregiver homes, and non-related extended family member homes; 4) DCFS practice and policy that requires social workers to continually assess the safety of the child during each home call and

private interview with the child, and 5) the social worker's ongoing contacts with collaterals, such as the child's family members, teachers, counselors, etc., in order to help assess for child safety and well-being.

The Probation Department's Placement Officers are the first line of defense for reducing the risk of harm to children in foster care due to the fact that they conduct monthly visits to the group home and with the relative/non-relative care provider. All Placement Officers conduct monthly visits with each child placed in a group home or a relative/non-relative home. The average number of Probation officer visits, as appropriate, per child in placement or with an active child welfare case is one time per month (each 30 day period). According to the PPQA database, the compliance rate for this measure is consistently above 90%. This rate has stayed consistent even with the large amount of vacancies and workload in the Placement Bureau. The Group Home Monitoring Unit also plays a large part in this measure in that once a group home has a substantiated claim, they are placed under a variety of corrective measures to bring their staff and their facility up to the standard and are closely monitored to maintain that standard. In addition to this, monthly provider meetings are held to disseminate informing regarding child safety and well-being. The Foster Home Consultants ensure that all placements with relative/non-relative caregivers meet the standards of safety and provision in order for the home to be approved. The weakness in this area is the result in the Group Home Monitoring Unit being understaffed creating a workload that is sometimes very challenging. Additional staff items for this unit have been requested in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Safety Outcome 2:

Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

With the high SDM utilization rates, the widespread use of Removal TDMs, the high compliance rate with the completion of timely social worker visits with the child, as well as the high percentage of compliance with timely response rates to both immediate and 10-day referrals, DCFS is doing well in putting forth great efforts to maintain children in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. Policy, as well and practice that is influenced by the implementation of such initiatives as Point of Engagement and Family to Family, requires that social workers not only assess safety and risk issues, but also, just as importantly, the strengths of the family and the community to determine if risks can be mitigated by the use of these strengths as well as services that can be provided by the community. Social workers are trained to make every reasonable effort to avoid removal of any child, including offering Family Preservation services, emergency caretaker services, and/or removing the risk to the child instead of removing the child from their home.

The Delinquency Court and the Probation Department are very concerned with maintaining youth safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. They are now making more orders for youth to reside with a relative or non-relative when the parents' home is not an option. The courts are working with probation, DCFS and DMH to provide services for the family such as Wraparound, Family Preservation and Evidence-Based Services to maintain the youth in the home whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency Outcome 2:

Family relationships and connections of the children are preserved, as appropriate.

Significant efforts are made to place children with relatives, and, while DCFS experienced some challenges implementing the requirements for completing relative caregiver assessments in a timely manner, the percentage of children whose first placement is with a relative continued to increase, going from 34.7% to 40.7% during the past three fiscal years. As of December 31, 2007, 51% of children in out-of-home care are placed with relatives. Placement policy requires social workers to inquire and search for relatives to be considered for placement and permanency options; DCFS also utilizes family engagement practices such as Team Decision Making to involve the child's family, non-related extended family members, and persons of support to promote the preservation of family connections.

DCFS also has seen an increase in the number of some or all siblings that are able to be placed together in foster care – going from 66.2% to almost 70% of some or all siblings being placed together during the past three fiscal periods.

Factors that have influenced the preservation of family relationships and connections include: 1) DCFS Policy and core curriculum training that mandates the practice of maintaining sibling relationships whenever possible and appropriate, exhausting all options before separating siblings; 2) implementation of the Family to Family Initiative, which requires, through the use of Team Decision Making, that the team discuss how the child's relationship with family members, friends, and connections to his or her community will be maintained while in foster care; 3) training that is provided to resource parents emphasizes the importance of supporting visitation between parents and children and between siblings; 4) case planning that must include information as to how family connections will be preserved, including the visitation plan, and 5) successful strategies such as the Permanency Partners Program (P3), Family Finding, and Concurrent Planning.

Probation's Residential-Based Services maintains monthly statistics on all cases supervised in out of home care. The average monthly statistic of youth that are

reunified within 12-18 months of removal from home is approximately 72. Currently, there are approximately 1200 Probation foster youth in group homes and approximately 150 in relative/non-relative homes. From July 2007 to present, there were 10,117 youth placed in group homes. Of those, 647 were reunified with their parents.

Due to the fact that Probation does not have access to CWS/CMS and the difficulty in obtaining information from DCFS regarding Probation foster youths' siblings, it is very difficult to find out the location of the youths' siblings or how many siblings there are. However, with the information that is provided, every consideration is given to placing siblings together.

Well-Being Outcome 2:

Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

DCFS has Public Health Nurses located in each regional office to help meet the medical, dental, and developmental needs of children and youth. When a child has a medical issue that requires special attention and care, the child is transferred to the Medical Placement Unit, where the child can receive more intensive case management services by the social worker and a Public Health Nurse. In addition, there are six, soon to be seven, Medical Hubs that are available to provide the state-required initial medical exams and the forensic exams for DCFS served children who are newly detained. The Medical Hubs offer forensic, medical and mental health expertise and assessment capacity 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

As for providing the mental health services needed for children and youth in foster care, there remains a need for improvement in developing the array of mental health services and assuring that such services are accessible. During fiscal year 07-08, DCFS and the Department of Mental Health will implement the court-ordered Enhanced Specialized Foster Care program Corrective Action Plan, in response to the Katie A. class action lawsuit that alleged that children in contact with the County's foster care system were not receiving the mental health services to which they were entitled.

Probation's Placement Bureau has only 2 Public Health Nurses to serve the entire county. Meetings are held between the PHNs and Probation to improve communication lines and ensure that their services are maximized. The PHNs attend regular meetings with the Group Home Providers and the Probation Officers in order to inform them of services provided and collaborate on current referrals.

Additionally, the Probation Department has implemented and is expanding the use of Placement Assessment Centers, which have had a great impact on providing stability and increasing well-being for youth in foster care. The current centers located at Boys

Republic and Rancho San Antonio provide a more comprehensive assessment for suitable placement minors. These assessments include a determination of psychosocial, educational, and mental health status as well as substance abuse use and gang involvement. The resulting extensive assessment packet information enables staff to make a more informed placement decision for these youth.

SYSTEMIC FACTORS:

Relevant Management Information Systems

The CWS/CMS system automates many of the tasks that county workers had to perform routinely and often manually. CWS/CMS allows for a centralized statewide system that allows State or county child welfare workers to share information on child abuse cases.

CWS/CMS is capable of tracking the children's location, demographics and permanency goals for all children in foster care and their families. The system is used at every level of the child welfare system. The CWS/CMS application provides critical information for timely child welfare intervention and case management. County and statewide data is available to child welfare administrators to support program management, budgeting and quality assurance activities. Over the last several years, DCFS has designed, developed and implemented a wide variety of web-based applications and reports to support the administration of child welfare services and the total business needs.

California Probation Departments do not have access to either CWS/CMS or any other statewide data tracking system. In the absence of this advantage, outcome data is not available for probation youth. This prevents probation departments statewide from obtaining reliable and accurate data to evaluate outcomes and monitor the progress of youth and families in the delinquency system. Since Probation Departments do not have access to CWS/CMS, it is not possible to obtain data on those youth who have crossed over from dependency to delinquency.

Probation's JCMS system is an excellent case management tool for case documentation and providing specific reports regarding certain case activities, it is limited in collecting, sorting, and analyzing data into meaningful and accurate reports and statistics. However, JCMS will be retired and replaced by a new enterprise case management system. The Probation Case Management System (PCMS) is scheduled for implementation sometime at the end of 2008. This system will include both adult and juvenile probation information, and the systems will be designed to provide information to the department's new data warehouse where information will be available to provide more comprehensive reports and information.

Staff and Provider Training

The DCFS Training System provides consistent, high quality training that orients staff to the social and professional expectations associated with child welfare practice. A wide variety of topics are offered and training opportunities are offered on a frequent basis to all levels of staff. Those who receive training are generally very satisfied with the quality of the training and actually do learn from the trainings, as evidenced in a training evaluation report conducted by the Inter-University Consortium on the CSW Core Academy. For the Statewide Standardized Core Modules for (1) Safety, Risk and Protective Capacity, (2) Case Planning/Case Management, (3) Placement and Permanency, DCFS CSW Core trainees scored higher than statewide new workers at a statistically significant level. With CMI I, our trainees scored equal to statewide new workers, and results for CMI II and Child and Youth Development are too new to report. DCFS is obviously pleased with this result and also grateful to have a sound and continuously improving training evaluation system in place to capture this kind of information.

Although the Probation Department's Training Bureau has improved the quality and variety of training offered to its employees, there is still limited access due to funding to specialized trainings that are necessary to fulfill State and Federal mandates required to improve safety, well-being and permanency for youth and their families. Since the last System Improvement Plan, DCFS has made specialized training available for probation staff, but the opportunities are few and are limited in enrollment space.

Agency Collaborations

DCFS and Probation have shown great evidence in their responsiveness, engagement and ongoing consultation with a broad array of individuals and organizations representing agencies responsible for implementing child welfare services and other stakeholders, including other County Departments, service providers, community members, faith-based representatives, resource parents, birth parents, youth, Juvenile Court, and various public and private child and family serving agencies. The Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project planning process includes involving stakeholders from the various regions to share their feedback regarding the expansion or development of services that are needed. In addition, DCFS has Department of Mental Health, Department of Health Services, and Department of Public Social Services staff co-located in regional offices in order to integrate services and provide a multi-disciplinary approach to case planning. Numerous collaborative trainings, conferences, and meetings have been hosted in order to share involvement in evaluating and reporting the progress made in child welfare. Regional offices host outreach activities on a regular basis every year to engage the broader community in sharing the responsibility

for the safety, permanency, and well-being of our children.

SUMMARY OF AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

Permanency Outcome 1:

Children have permanency and stability in their living situation without increasing reentry into foster care.

In spite of progress made in improving the timelines towards reunification and adoption, L.A. County has not met the national standard goal for 12 of the 15 data indicators related to the permanency outcome. However, L.A. County has demonstrated strength in placement stability for children who have been in foster care anywhere from 8 days to 12 months and from 12 months to 24 months, as DCFS' performance on these two measures are above the national standard goal. However, we don't see the same level of performance for placement stability for children who have been in care at least 24 months, as we are slightly below the national standard goal on this measure, but still higher than statewide performance.

Though the data trends show that DCFS has been increasingly reunifying more children more quickly, the county is also seeing a greater percentage of children re-enter foster care after reunification has taken place. To help determine what may be causing the increase in reentries, DCFS would need to investigate case specific information to look at possible causal factors. For instance, when children are reunified, what services are provided to ensure the family is stabilized and able to care safely for their children? And, what type of transitional plan was devised before reunification actually took place? And, what dynamic in the family is triggering reentries?

Probation's Placement Permanency & QA Unit receives and assesses all cases referred by DCFS, delinquency court, Probation Officers, Attorneys, Child Advocates and the Placement Quality Assurance process to provide permanency through Adoption or Legal Guardianship. All cases are investigated for parents' whereabouts, relatives/non-relative extended family and life-long connections. Each permanency officer carries a caseload of 6-8 and meets with the DCFS/Probation Collaborative Permanency Committee monthly to discuss all cases destined for legal guardianship and adoption. Currently, the committee is working on 3 potential adoptions and 3 potential legal guardianships.

Another strategy being utilized to increase stability in probation youth's living situation

and decrease reentry into foster care is the Evidence-Based Services, Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST). These in-home services have been effective and have assisted probation youth from reentering the system.

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Case Planning

Safe Measures shows that for 2007, case plan completion for all cases that required an approved case plan ranged from 71.2% to 74% compliance. Anywhere from 22.9% to 25% of those cases had a case plan missing or the case plan was expired, and anywhere from 2.9% to 4% of the cases had case plans with a pending approval status.

While there is a systematic and operational way of engaging family in safety planning during Removal/Possible Removal TDMs, there is no system in place for assuring that families and youth are involved in case planning thereafter. Stakeholders report that not everyone who meets the criteria for a TDM actually gets referred for a TDM. Stakeholders reported that often times, parents are not aware of their rights and responsibilities and are not meaningfully engaged in the case planning process. Birth parents, youth, and caregivers reported that social workers do not spend enough time with them to do thorough assessments of how well the implementation of the case plan is coming along due to either performance issues with social workers and/or the high workload demands that prohibit the social worker's tracking, monitoring, and carry through of case plan activities. However, if a family is involved with a program such as Family Preservation or Wraparound Services, families, youth and caregivers are more likely to be engaged in case planning.

Probation's Permanency and Quality Assurance Unit reviews all cases and monitors compliance with the initial case plan development and subsequent updates. The data collected as to the rate of compliance is shared with the supervisors to determine where corrective action through training, enhanced supervision, etc., needs to be applied. Departmental training will take place in May 2008 to ensure that all Placement Officers have the knowledge and resources to improve the compliance rate of case plans.

Concurrent planning is a primary focus in case planning and is very much a priority and practice of the Department. Adoption and Legal Guardianship are new processes for Probation since there was no process in delinquency court previously. There is now a process in place for probation to grant legal guardianships, terminate parental rights and finalize an adoption. All Placement Officers' cases are reviewed to ensure that compliance for Concurrent Planning is met. There are many factors for older Probation youth that create a barrier for adoption as a concurrent or a permanent plan. Currently,

there are 3 cases that are in the adoption process and 3 cases in the legal guardianship process in delinquency court and another 46 cases being assessed for adoption and legal guardianship.

Quality Assurance System

Los Angeles County is part of California's Outcomes and Accountability System (COAS), which requires the County to monitor and track State and Federal outcome measures and participate in a triennial cycle of self-assessment, System Improvement Planning, implementation and review. DCFS also produces and publishes an extensive array of data reports from CWS/CMS, SafeMeasures, and Cognos in order to do quantitative analysis that helps to determine whether or not progress is being made in outcomes related to safety, permanency and well-being.

While DCFS participates in the COAS, DCFS does not have its own internal formalized system in place where qualitative data is collected on cases in order to provide regular, in-depth examinations of practice issues across the county. Collecting qualitative data on a systematic and standardized basis would allow DCFS to go beyond data analysis in order to help us identify problems in practice that is causing poor performance on outcome indicators. For example, a qualitative analysis for those cases that are re-entering the system can help us discover challenges in practice and possible causal factors or triggers for children re-entering the child welfare system. Additionally, DCFS needs to have a process/standard in which plans of corrective and preventive actions are used to remedy performance gaps that are seen during qualitative reviews.

The Probation Department established the Placement Quality Assurance Unit in response to the passage of AB636 in 2004. This unit ensures compliance with State and Federal Mandates for the Placement Bureau and participates with DCFS in ensuring that the key components of the Outcomes and Accountability System are in place, utilized and completed as appropriate for both departments. The unit is currently expanding its work in the area of Group Home Monitoring and Relative/Non-Relative care. The major priority of this unit is ensuring that outcomes in the area of safety, well-being and permanency improve for all youth and their families. In addition to this unit, the Probation Department also has a Quality Assurance Bureau that focuses on the larger customer service and improvement practices for the entire department, both juvenile and adults.

Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families:

The data shows that the majority of children who are removed from their home for safety reasons are placed in foster homes outside of their community. From July 1,

2007 through December 31, 2007, there were 2,566 (63.8%) children initially placed in non-relative placements. Of these 2,566 children, 48% were placed outside of their community. In order to improve placement proximity to children's community of origin, there is a great need to recruit resource parents within SPAs 4, 5, and 6 - the greatest areas of need since these are the communities from which the greatest numbers of children are removed. Additional resources are needed in order to carry out recruitment activities in such large geographic areas.

Resource Families continue to request additional supports to help them provide ongoing care for special needs children, such as respite care, additional training, crisis intervention resources, and greater responsiveness from the child's social worker when they are in need of help.

Budget constraints have further caused challenges in providing adequate funding to support, recruit and retain foster, adoptive, and relative caregivers.

Appendix I

Team Decision Making Outcomes Summary Chart

Los Angeles County - TDM Data 2005 - 2007				
TDM Meeting Totals (includes all type of TDMs)				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	3,106	9,846	12,276	295.2% increase
Birth Parent/Youth/Family/Community Engagement in TDMs:				
Percentage of <u>Birth Parent</u> Involvement at Imminent Risk of Placement TDMs				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	84.3%	86.3%	66.7%	20.9% decrease
Percentage of <u>Youth Involvement</u> at Imminent Risk of Placement TDM Meetings				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	45.4%	40.0	35.2	22.5% decrease
Percentage of <u>Family</u> and Non-Related Extended Family Member Involvement in TDM Meetings				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	72.2%	68.5%	62.5%	13.4% decrease

Percentage of <u>Community</u> Service Provider and Community Representative Involvement				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	36.9%	36.0	23.1%	37.4% decrease

Appendix I

Team Decision Making Outcomes Summary Chart

Outcomes for Imminent Risk of Placement TDMs				
Child Remains at/Returns Home (Voluntary)				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	44.6%	39.9%	39.9%	10.5% decrease
Child Remains at/Returns Home (Court)				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	16.0%	17.4%	20.0%	25% increase
Place/Continue Child in Out-of-Home Care (Voluntary)				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	9.1	7.0%	5.3%	41.8% decrease
Place/Continue Child in Out-of Home Care (Court)				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	15.3	18.8%	18.8%	22.9% increase
Referral Closed/No DCFS Involvement				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	12.8	14.4%	13.5%	5.5% increase
Maintain/Return Child Home Totals				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	73.4%	71.7%	73.4%	0% change
Out of Home Care Total				
	2005	2006	2007	Percent Change
	24.4%	25.8%	24.1	1.2% decrease

Appendix II

Wraparound Outcome Measures

Permanency Outcome Measures	Target Outcome	Actual Outcome
% of children who remain with families while receiving wraparound services	81%	91%
% of wrap graduated placed with parents/ legal guardians/relatives upon graduation.	85%	89%
% of families with wrap graduates who continue to use community based services 6 months after graduation	85%	86%
% of children remaining w/family 6 months post graduation	75%	89%
Safety Outcome Measures	Target Outcome	Average Outcome
No Other Substantiated Allegation of Abuse or Neglect while Receiving Wraparound services	90%	95%
No Other Substantiated Allegation within One Year after Graduating from Wraparound Program	94%	97%
Well-Being Measures	Target Outcome	Actual Outcome
% of Wrap Children maintaining rate or improved attendance from the previous year	75%	79%
% of Children Wrap Clients Functioning at Grade level or Improved grade-level functioning from Previous Year	50%	67%
% of Wrap Children with No Unmet Medical/Physical Needs	90%	98%

Appendix III:

Direct Programs and Services to Children and Their Families

DCFS Direct Programs and Services

The Department has four Bureaus designed to oversee all direct services to children and their families. Special services are also offered out of the Office of the Medical Director. The following is a synopsis of our Department's programs, services, partnerships and included is a sampling of initiatives sponsored by each Service Bureau.

Service Bureau 1

Service Bureau 1 provides services throughout Service Planning Areas 7 and 8. In addition, the Department's Adoptions and Permanency Resources Division and the Department's Youth Development Services Division are under the auspices of Service Bureau 1.

Service Planning Area 7 – Belvedere and Santa Fe Springs Offices

DCFS/DMH Specialized Foster Care Mental Health Services Program (Basic, Intensive, Full Service Partnership, MST): Implemented in 2006, the Specialized Foster Care Mental Health Services Program was developed to advance and expedite DCFS efforts to provide appropriate mental health services to detained children and youth. The program is composed of Department of Mental Health (DMH) Psychiatric Social Workers and Medical Case Workers, co-located within the SPA 7 offices, who serve as system navigators to coordinate services from service providers and link children, youth and families to appropriate mental health services. This program serves an average of 35 to 45 children a month. In fiscal year 2006-2007, the Specialized Foster Care Mental Health Services program received 726 referrals for the Santa Fe Springs Office.

Latino Family Preservation Program (LFPP): Implemented in 1992, the Latino Family Preservation Program (LFPP) uses a comprehensive community-based approach to empowering families by providing concrete assistance (e.g. advocacy and parenting courses) and facilitating interagency cooperation while maintaining a child at home. The services provided have resulted in a reduction in the number of families requiring court intervention. This program serves an average of 242 children a month.

Special Immigrant Status Unit (SIS): Implemented in 1991 in collaboration with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly Immigrant and Nationalization Services or INS), the unit strives to file applications for each undocumented child in the permanent placement program. Attainment of a change in legal status allows these children the right to remain in the United States upon emancipation from the child welfare system. This program serves an average of 230 children a month.

Regional Permanency Review Team (RPRT): Implemented in 2002, the Regional Permanency Review Team is a multidisciplinary team of child welfare, mental health and education professionals who meet on a weekly basis to review long-term foster care cases for the purpose of developing a plan to provide permanency for children in

Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (formerly long-term foster care). The team strives to return children home to a parent or place children into adoptive or guardianship homes. This process is designed to identify the unmet permanency and mental health and educational needs of children. At the conclusion of each case presentation, the RPRT team develops a concrete but simple plan that specifies action steps, responsible parties and expected action completion dates--all for the purpose of filling gaps in services, meeting existing service needs, and moving children toward permanency. The RPRT team currently reviews an average of six to eight cases (12 to 15 children) within a month during its bimonthly meetings.

Partnerships for Families (PFF) First 5 LA: Implemented in 2006, the Partnerships for Families (PFF) First 5 LA Program has a joint goal with DCFS of preventing child maltreatment, expanding prevention and early intervention services and supports for high risk families, as classified on the Structured Decision-Making (SDM) tool, when families have a child five years of age or younger. This program also serves pregnant women at risk for child maltreatment referred by local law enforcement, birthing hospitals, medical or domestic violence personnel. This latter group of pregnant mothers is classified as at risk for child maltreatment based on the following risk factors: domestic violence, maternal substance abuse, and/or maternal depression. To date, this program has served a total of 139 families.

Family Substance Abuse Treatment Program (AKA Drug Court): Implemented in 2007, the Dependency Drug Court (located at Edelman Children's Court) uses a "team approach" to working with parents whose children have been detained by DCFS. The "team" includes the child's parent, the Judge, the attorneys for the child and parent, County Counsel, a DCFS Social Worker, and substance abuse treatment providers. All families who are referred to "Drug Court" must agree to participate in a Family Substance Abuse Treatment Program (FSATP). The FSATP is a one-year treatment and testing program that can help parents get off and stay off drugs and/or alcohol to lead clean and sober lives. Thus, participation in this program increases the likelihood for parents to have a successful and timely reunification with their children. This program serves an average of 20 families a month.

Parents in Partnership (PIP-Parenting Program): Initially founded in 2005 as the Belvedere office's Parent Advisory Group, the group joined the DCFS Family-to-Family Project in 2007 to become the PIP Parenting Program. The program is comprised of a committed group of parents who have successfully reunited with their children and are working with DCFS to support parents newly involved with the Department. This team of parents was trained by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and partnered with DCFS to provide orientation classes to DCFS involved parents to educate them regarding their rights, navigating through the child welfare system, and working towards reunifying with their children. The orientation classes, as well as, the PIP Support Group meetings are held monthly at the DCFS Belvedere office. Membership for this program has ranged from 20 members to a current group of eight dedicated parents.

Whittier Project: The Santa Fe Springs office's Whittier Project links Emergency Response Children's Social Workers to schools, hospitals and law enforcement

agencies in the city of Whittier, which generates the largest amount of referrals in the Santa Fe Springs service area--approximately 25% of the referrals received by the office. The Whittier Project provides on-site support to the identified community agencies and conducts training on child abuse reporting. The Whittier Project also provides training on the Department's goals in an effort to help educate the public about the role of DCFS in the community and to help change the public image of DCFS from an agency that breaks up families to an image that reflects an agency working to improve family functioning. The Whittier Project links families with community agencies and offers voluntary services in lieu of detention.

Santa Fe Springs Foster Parent Association: The Spanish speaking Foster Parent Association (FPA) meets on a monthly basis at the Santa Fe Springs regional office. This collaborative effort provides an opportunity for the foster parents from various areas to come together and network, as well as to get questions and concerns answered in a prompt and efficient manner. In addition, it allows for a stronger relationship between the FPA and DCFS, which assists in the Department's goal of improving permanency and safety. During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, an average of 15-20 foster parents participated in the monthly regional meetings.

Service Planning Area 8 – Lakewood and Torrance Offices

Long Beach SCAN Team: Lakewood office staff meet monthly at Long Beach Memorial/Miller's Children's Hospital. The group includes hospital staff, law enforcement, DCFS, and the school district. The group identifies and reviews two to three cases that have presented "systems" issues and attempts to problem solve the issues to prevent future incidences of the same problems. The group is chaired by Miller Children's Hospital's staff, Melissa Sadikoff, LCSW, and Steven Jensen, MD.

Parent Partners Group: The Parent Partners group was developed and trained in conjunction with Casey. Since October 2006, a core group of eight Parent Partners have successfully navigated through the child welfare system. The members have undergone intensive training in preparation to become mentors for parents who are currently struggling with how to navigate the system. The group is ready to begin partnering and mentoring, pending information on program funding. In the meantime, the Parent Partners have been speaking at staff meetings, community forums, and other venues. Their stories have been inspirational to staff and community partners and will be a valuable resource to the office once funding is in place.

Lakewood Community Training Team: This newly formed group is designed to provide mandated reporter training and information to the Lakewood office's community partners and community service providers. The group trains from a scripted hour-long Mandated Reporter Training developed in conjunction with Miller's Children's Hospital staff. The team currently consists of eight to ten Children's Social Worker and Supervising Children's Social Worker staff from the Lakewood Office. Between October and December 2007, the staff conducted nine trainings in the community to approximately 250 people.

Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) Collaborative: The collaborative is composed of

DMH, DCFS, and the TAY service providers in SPA 8 who meet monthly. The group strives to identify service gaps and needs, to share valuable program information and events, and to discuss strategies about how to better serve transitional aged youth in the community.

Interagency Consultation & Assessment Team (ICAT): ICAT's goals are to provide culturally competent assessments and consultations for foster children/youth and their families who require mental health services. ICAT is utilized to also implement "best practice" guidelines for mental health screening/assessment of children served by our department. Further, ICAT assists in referring Children's Social Workers with coordinated case management, referrals, and follow-up in seeking appropriate community-based mental health services. ICAT also participates as a member of the TDM process to help identify mental health problems, assess the level of services required and provide assistance to families to improve access to appropriate mental health services. For the fiscal year 2006/2007, there have been a total of 329 children and families served from the Torrance office.

South Bay Community Partnership Council Mentoring Program: **The Torrance office has worked towards the development of mentoring programs for foster youth and to assist local mentoring agencies to identify, train, match and sustain qualified mentors for foster youth through the formation of a coalition. Existing South Bay mentoring agencies have been recruited to address the needs of mentors for foster teens by setting aside spaces (with no additional funding) to serve youth referred from the DCFS Torrance office and the Probation Department. The Torrance office identified and referred over 200 foster youth to the mentoring program.**

The following activities and events were sponsored by the South Bay Coalition to support and recruit as well as engage youth and the community in some type of mentoring activity. The following events were held on behalf of the South Bay Coalition:

1. Chivas soccer game – September 2006
2. Universal Studios – March 2007
3. Bowling (Lucky Strike) – March 2007
4. Clippers basketball game – April 2007
5. Long Beach Aquarium – April 2007
6. Mentee/Resource Orientation – June 2007
7. Broadway Entertainment – June 2007

Impacting Hearts is a volunteer group mentoring program that is community based. Impacting Hearts began as a Youth Club for DCFS youth and youth living in the Inglewood community--engaging them in weekly activities as well as accompanying them on Coalition sponsored mentoring events. The site in Inglewood was chosen due to the high volume of referrals and detentions originating from that area. Approximately 40 youth attend the weekly Thursday Night Youth Club at the First Christian Church of Inglewood.

Interagency Delinquency Prevention Program (IDPP): IDPP replaced Start Taking Action Responsibly Today (START) Program effective May 15, 2007. IDPP is a collaborative effort between the Departments of Children and Family Services, Mental Health, Probation and Los Angeles Unified School District to provide intervention services to dependent youth most at risk of delinquency. This team works together, along with care providers, DCFS Team Decision Making facilitators, and other stakeholders, to produce a comprehensive assessment and a shared intervention plan to address problem behaviors. Since the beginning of the program IDPP has serviced 22 youth in the Torrance office.

Faith-Based Committee: The Faith-based Committee is comprised of 45 churches working in partnership with the Torrance Office to support the most vulnerable children and families in the community. This Faith-based Committee is working on three initiatives: Recruitment and support of resource families, Visitation Centers, and Prevention. The initiatives are aligned with the departmental goals of reduced abuse, reduced timelines to permanency, and reduced reliance on out-of-home care. Two events were put on by the RDS workgroup, a Faith-Leaders Conference and Family Fun Day. The events' purpose was to enlist churches to recruit potential adoptive families, resource families and mentors. At the Faith Leaders Conference, 45 churches signed on to help in recruitment of adoptive and resource families within their church. All the resource families from SPA 8 were invited for the Family Fun Day event. Approximately 4,000 people attended and 78 people were interested in becoming adoptive or resource families.

The Faith-based Committee has partnered up with the South Bay Center for Counseling to plan how churches can support the Department through preventive services. In addition, a small pilot project will be headed by the faith community to reduce timelines to permanency by developing Visitation Centers throughout the Torrance region.

Casey Foundation Anchor Site: As an anchor site for the Family to Family Initiative, the Torrance office receives technical support, funding, and specialized training from the Annie E. Casey foundation in order to help implement strategies that improve outcomes for children and families (e.g., building community partnerships, team decision making, recruiting, developing, and supporting resource families, and evaluation). As an anchor site, the Torrance Office is assigned a Family to Family Liaison that overlooks and manages the Family to Family organizational structure and coordinates the sharing of information and work plans among the various workgroups and committees that do the work of Family to Family. The Family to Family Liaison assists with coordinating events and meetings that maintain, strengthen, and preserve community partnerships and conducts outreach efforts to increase the quantity and quality of partnerships. Implementing the Family to Family strategies should result in a reduction of children entering foster care, more children being placed within their communities, improved service delivery, greater support for resource families, and reduced timelines to permanency.

Adoptions and Permanency Resource Division (APRD)

Concurrent Planning Redesign: Concurrent Planning Redesign (CPR) has been

developed as a joint Labor-Management initiative to address the goal of returning children that have entered foster care into safe, stable, and lifelong homes. Concurrent planning sets up an alternative permanent plan, while simultaneously providing Family Reunification services for a detained child. Simultaneously preparing for an alternative permanent plan while working with a family toward Family Reunification does not mean that DCFS is not committed to assisting the family to strengthen itself; rather, DCFS is committed to providing timely permanence for children. Planning for permanence ensures that all reasonable efforts to safely maintain the child at home, or safely reunify the child with his or her family will be made. It also means that if the child cannot be maintained in or returned to the family of origin, another permanent family is prepared to meet the child's need for permanence in a timely manner.

The coordinated rollout of CPR in each DCFS office began with the Lakewood office in March 2005. The rollout continued to July 2007 when the last of 17 DCFS offices completed the training and implementation of the first phase of CPR. The rollout of Concurrent Planning Redesign includes systematic work-shift changes in the form of:

- Use of new family background information gathering strategies.
- Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) for adoption cases becomes a team responsibility with the Dependency Investigator coordinating the team.
- Permanency (Adoption) staff are assigned the case earlier and assume full responsibility for all adoption-related activities.
- Family Maintenance and Reunification social worker remains the primary case manager through adoption finalization and termination of jurisdiction, thus maintaining a consistent Children's Social Worker for the child and stopping a case transfer that can delay permanency.
- Integration of CPR with other offices strategies--Points of Engagement (POE), Team Decision Making (TDM), Permanency Partners Program (P3), Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) and Family Finding.
- Full disclosure with children, birth parents, caregiver and others involved in the child's life by all Children Social Workers throughout the life of the case.
- Monthly office-based Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) meetings, which facilitate teamwork, office review and action items related to the CPR process.
- Participation in central monthly Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) meetings that facilitate CPR evaluation, review and action items by representatives from the offices. Representatives are staff from all levels and from a variety of programs.

Permanency Partners Program (P3): In an effort to assist case-carrying Children's Social Workers find legally permanent homes and adult connections for older youth age 12-18, the Department has implemented the Permanency Partners Program (P3). Since October 2004, P3 has worked to pair a Permanency Partner (a specially trained part-time Children's Social Worker) with a youth, in order to identify one or more adult connections with the primary goal of reunifying the youth with family. If reunification is not feasible, legal permanent plans of adoption and legal guardianship are explored. At minimum, P3 strives to provide all youth with an adult connection and/or mentor. P3 services are being provided at each of the DCFS offices, with one or more staff

assigned to each office. Currently, there are 74 P3 Children's Social Workers and 12 P3 Supervising Children's Social Workers, working part-time, with most being DCFS retirees (not to exceed 120 days per year). Each office has created a process to refer youth who are 12-18 years old and in long term foster care to their P3 staff.

As of December 2007, P3 has provided services to 2311 youth. Approximately, 32% (747) of the youth now have a legally permanent plan identified or established. A total of 76 youth have returned home to a parent and had their child welfare case closed, 23 youth have returned home and continue to have their case supervised by DCFS and 79 are moving towards reunification with a parent. In addition, 12 youth have been adopted, 9 youth are in adoptive placements and 214 youth who were previously opposed to adoption are now involved in adoption planning. Finally, 30 youth have had a legal guardian appointed and their cases closed through KinGAP, 90 youth are in a legal guardianship and continue to have their case supervised by DCFS and 214 youth have a plan of legal guardianship identified and are moving through the court process.

Adoption Promotion Support Services (APSS): *APSS' goals are to increase permanency for children in Los Angeles County; to decrease the number of children remaining in out-of-home care; to increase the number of finalized adoptions; to empower parents and children through information, support and skills; and to provide needed therapy services and adoption mentors program. The mandated services are individual, group and family therapy, mentors and support groups; in addition, APSS provides case management, linkage services and bilingual services. Therapists have adoption-related expertise. Staff are trained or have worked in the field of adoption. Additionally, Adoption mentors assist with APSS services. Such mentors are parents who have adopted or adoptees that are willing to work directly with new prospective adoptive families as they complete the adoption process. A dedicated number is provided to families, children and youth to call for support and receive answers to their questions from mentors during any time of the day. APSS therapy services are targeted to: (1) children and adults who are hesitant about adoption; (2) children and families as they transition during pre-placement steps; (3) children and families in adoptive placement; and (4) families whose adoption has finalized, and the child has not reached 18 years of age. Referral to the APSS is quick and simple. As of December 31, 2007, approximately 1230 referrals and 4,920 persons were served since the program's inception.*

The Older Youth Adoption Project (OYAP): *On July 12, 2006, California Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 1808 authorizing a project to ensure the successful adoption of older (ages 9 and up) foster youth. CDSS was authorized to give a grant to LA County of \$3.75 million to be used by December 2009 for this purpose.*

The large majority of the grant is being used to fund 14 Children's Social Worker positions and three Supervising Children's Social Worker positions. These OYAP Children's Social Workers carry a caseload of children ages nine and older who are

in need of a permanent family. They have two major functions: family finding and engagement services and intensive recruitment services. The OYAP staff is taking on the tasks of the Adoption Children's Social Worker, a P3 social worker, and a Placement and Recruitment (PRU) Children's Social Worker. The staff is working in models that have found to be successful in reaching permanency throughout the country.

The remainder of the grant will be used for smaller projects such as supporting some activities of Heart Gallery LA and creating a theater workshop and performance group for children waiting to be adopted.

The goal is to provide services to a minimum of 300 of the most at-risk youth and to have at least 33% of the children in this project reach permanency by being placed with a relative, birth parent, legal guardian, or adoptive parent. Children's Social Workers were interviewed and selected in December 2007 and in house training and case assignments started in January 2008.

Youth Development Services Division

Independent Living Program (ILP): ILP is a federally funded program that offers supplemental and linkage services and/or direct funds for DCFS/Probation foster youth or former foster youth who are ILP eligible. Youth 16 to 20 years old are eligible for ILP services if they were in foster care at any time from their 16th to 19th birthday. There were 8,300 ILP eligible youth served during the fiscal year 2006-2007. The program services include:

- Youth in foster care:

Youth ages 14 to 15 are eligible for educational assistance, including tutoring. Youth ages 16 through 20 are eligible for 30 hours of Life Skills training. High School Seniors can receive funds for senior expenses such as cap and gown, photos, yearbook, class ring, prom tickets, grad night tickets, etc. Youth in care may be eligible for other educational benefits.

Celebration I is a graduation ceremony comprised of ILP-eligible youth that have a 2.8 overall Grade Point Average (GPA) or higher. The celebration is an opportunity for youth to be recognized for their academic achievements and be awarded scholarships.

Celebration II is a day of fun in honor of high school graduates who will graduate from high school or complete the equivalent by August of the current year. The youth receives free admission to the event (e.g. Universal Studios), free

transportation, food, and possible gifts and scholarship awards.

- **Former Foster Youth (18 up to 21 years of age):**

These youth are eligible for assistance with auto insurance; education funds (tuition, books, supplies, school-related fees, parking, transportation); Life Skills training and self-selected vocational training; clothing funds (work uniforms, interview clothing); access to housing programs; room and board (move-in costs, three to six months rental assistance, appliances, etc.); apartment start-up costs (up to \$300.00 to purchase sheets, towels, silverware, etc.); assistance with food costs; transportation (standard price for bus pass/gas for three month periods as needed); and funding for non-covered health-related costs.

Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP): THPP youth are between 16 to 18 years old and are on target for high school graduation; doing well both in school and in their current placement; sufficiently responsible to share an apartment with a roommate; enrolled in the Independent Living Program (ILP); able to follow the rules and guidelines of THPP; and be under the current supervision of DCFS or Probation in out-of-home placement. This program has the capacity to house 120 youth per year.

Transitional Housing Program (THP) for Homeless Young People: THP provides housing and supportive services to emancipated foster youth age 18 through 22 years old who are homeless or may potentially become homeless due to living in temporary unstable housing, and who have no other housing options (as a note, a youth must be admitted to the program before her/his 22nd birthday). The capacity for this program is 244 beds. The youth reside in one and two-bedroom apartments that are located throughout Los Angeles County

Homeless Prevention Initiative (HPI): The initiative is designed to assist former foster youth ages 18 to 25 and for ILP Youth ages 18 to 21 years old. The funding is strictly provided for youth in the Los Angeles County area. The program began in Fall 2007 and the number of clients served is less than 25 to date. Program staff expects to serve 50 youth during calendar year 2007 and 100 youth during the fiscal year 2007-2008.

Transitional Housing Placement Plus Program: The THP Plus Program has been operational since May 2007 and serves youth between 18 to 24 years old. These are emancipated (DCFS/Probation) youth who are at risk of homelessness and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- History of substance abuse
- Multiple placements within the foster care system
- Previous engagement with the Juvenile Justice system
- No high school diploma or GED
- Lack of family support network
- Learning disabilities

- Little or no attachment to the labor force
- Pregnant or parenting youth

In addition to the above programs, YDS has three collaborations with community and County partners:

Youth Development Services Partnership (YDSP): Formerly the Emancipation Program Partnership, YDSP is a monthly collaborative partnership convened by the CEO and co-chaired by DCFS and Probation. Partners include the Commission for Children and Families, Juvenile Court judges, Children's Law Center, Public Counsel, ACSHA, DPSS, DMH, foster parent representative(s), Casey Family Program, YDS-Ombudsman and United Friends of the Children.

Youth Transition Action Teams (YTAT): This initiative includes community linkages/collaboration with Work Force Investment Agencies (WIA), both City and County, to ensure foster and Probation youth access to job training and employment opportunities via One-Stop and Work Source Centers, improving partnerships with LAUSD, Casey Family Services, community based organizations, and faith-based organizations. As a result of YTAT efforts, quarterly meetings are held with LAUSD to improve upon each of agency's role and responsibilities.

Finally, the YTAT program consultant is also the consultant for the Department of Labor (DOL) Foster Youth Demonstration Project. The Project is a collaborative funding grant initiated by DOL and Casey Family Program. This Program serves 100 youth annually. Services include intensive case management, peer support/mentoring and job training and job placement. Casey Family has agreed to fund a three-year program outcome evaluation.

Service Bureau 2

Service Bureau 2 provides services throughout Service Planning Areas 4 and 6. In addition the Department's Child Protection Hotline (CPH), Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP), Out of County Services, Drug Endangered Children (DEC) and Multi-Agency Response Team (MART) are under the auspices of Service Bureau 2.

The Child Protection Hotline (CPH): CPH provides assessment services for reports of abuse and neglect allegations from mandated reporters and the general public for the County of Los Angeles. The Children's Social Workers gather information, assess allegations and generate referrals. The CPH staff also provides training, consultation, resources and information to Law Enforcement, Educators, and other professionals related to situations of potential abuse and neglect.

Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP): *ERCP is a 24/7 operation that conducts investigations of abuse of children countywide. ERCP receives referrals from the DCFS Child Protection Hotline. The referrals received by ERCP require an immediate response. These investigations are conducted by Children's Social Workers who are stationed centrally as well as at law enforcement agencies, hospitals and*

other facilities located throughout Los Angeles County. Upon completion of the investigation, services and findings, cases are closed or sent to the Regional offices for follow-up or case-carrying responsibilities and continuing services.

SPA 4 Metro North

Minor Parent-Teen Pregnancy Disincentive Program: This countywide program is designed to discourage pregnancy and encourage appropriate parenting of minors and their children. The Department of Public Social Services provides the linkage between pregnant teens and minor parents who apply for AFDC to DCFS to assure the protection of their children. Minor parents must reside with parents, legal guardian, or related adult, or in an adult supervised arrangement, and must apply for CAL/WORKS.

Alternative Services for Youth (formerly known as the Rites of Passage Program): The Alternative Services for Youth is a program designed to teach the ten-steps of passage, consisting of spiritual, emotional, social, mental, historical, cultural, personal, economic, political and physical components. The Alternative Services for Youth program teaches concepts which are fundamental to the process of passage from childhood to adulthood. The youth that participate in this program are exposed to educational workshops, skill development training, violence prevention methods, field trips, martial arts, dance, and tutoring and study groups.

Sensitive Case Unit: This specialized unit provides protective services to children whose parents are Department of Children and Family Services employees, political officials, law enforcement personnel or are public figures from the entertainment industry, etc. that may receive media attention.

Family Finding: This is a key strategy developed to help achieve older youth permanency. Through this program, Metro North staff seeks to identify and engage relatives who are not currently known and/or involved in a child's life, with the goal of promoting meaningful, permanent connections with the youth. This was developed based on the fact that there are too many children who do not have sufficient connections with extended family or other committed adults.

California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP): The goal is to achieve permanency for older children and youth in California so that no youth leaves foster care without a lifelong connection to a caring adult. The objective of CPYP includes increased awareness among the child welfare agencies and staff, legislators and judicial officers in the state of the urgent need that older children and youth have for permanency and to influence public policy and administrative practices so that they promote permanency.

SPA 6: Wateridge, Compton, Vermont Corridor (previously Century and

Hawthorne) Offices

Black Family Investment Project: This Wateridge Office program is an intensive case management family preservation program that emphasizes culture awareness and ethnocentric pride to empower families toward positive change. Staff in this program is specially trained in ethnic family therapy and peer group leadership to assist parents in developing new techniques, parenting guidelines and environmental cues to protect and guide their children. This program provides short-term intensive, in-home, family and community based services to African American families. The services are culturally sensitive and are geared towards prevention placement. Family preservation services are provided to families whose children are at risk of removal from their homes.

Multi-Agency Response Team (MART): This program is part of the Compton Project. In response to an October 2003 Board Motion, the Department of Children and Family Services implemented MART to work in collaboration with law enforcement to provide protective services to children identified in homes associated with high levels of illegal gang, firearm and narcotic activity. The goal of the MART Unit is to provide a more expedited and trained response to law enforcement referrals so as to maximize child safety. The MART Unit responds countywide to requests from Law Enforcement Agencies (i.e. Specialized Task Forces) to be present at their command center(s) when warrants and parole/probation/abatement “sweeps” are to be conducted. In addition, MART regularly participates in Intelligent Sensitive investigations where wire taps, undercover operations, surveillance and criminal information management systems have indicated children may be victims of abuse or neglect.

The team works in collaboration with the following law enforcement agencies:

- Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department
- Los Angeles Police Department
- 44 local independent law enforcement agencies
- Drug Endangered Children’s Program
- Federal Bureau of Investigations
- U. S. Department of Treasury, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security-Child Pornography and Narcotics Task Force
- Federal – Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Marshal’s Service
- Immigration & Customs Enforcement – Gang/Narcotic/Child Pornography Investigation Sections
- Other local, state and federal agencies

In addition to providing the aforementioned services, MART Unit also administrates over the Drug Endangered Children’s Program (DEC). The DEC program is specifically tasked with the responsibility of providing response services, local and national training

and global best practice development in the area of drug trafficking, distribution and manufacturing of illegal and dangerous drugs.

In 2007, the MART program received a number of awards including:

The Drug Endangered Children's Task Force Award for **“Sustained Superior Accomplishment”**

The 2007 Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission Award for **“Best Inter-Agency Collaboration”**

The 2007 Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission **“Silver Eagle Award”** indicating that the MART Unit was the second highest performing program in Los Angeles County throughout the year.

Out of County Services (OCS): *OCS is a section under the Child Protection Hotline that includes the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), International Placements, and Inter-county Transfers. The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) is statutory law in all 52 member jurisdictions and a binding contract between member jurisdictions. The ICPC establishes uniform legal and administrative procedures governing the interstate placement of children. The ICPC is the best means we have to ensure the protection and services to children who are placed across state lines. The Out-of-County Services provides a countywide service delivery system to the Los Angeles area for children requiring placement between counties within California, outside of the state, as well as outside of the country. The section also oversees all incoming requests from other counties, states and countries for placement of children within the Los Angeles area with relatives and parents.*

Service Bureau 3

Service Bureau 3 provides services throughout Service Planning Areas 1 and 3. In addition Juvenile Court Services (JCS), the Asian Pacific Project, and American Indian Units are under the auspices of Service Bureau 3.

Service Planning Area 1 – Lancaster and Palmdale Offices

First 5 LA/Partnerships for Families (PFF): As part of the First 5 LA/Partnerships for Families (PFF), both the Lancaster and Palmdale DCFS offices currently provide referrals to the Children's Bureau of Los Angeles/Lancaster Office to serve families that have been identified as high or very high risk in specified zip codes, but where there exist insufficient grounds to open a case. The families must have a child 5 years or younger as the victim or at risk of abuse or neglect. Children's Bureau provides necessary services to the family on a voluntary basis for up to six months. Currently,

services are provided to 20 - 25 families per month.

Parents In Partnership: This program is being implemented to assist new parents entering the DCFS system. The program involves collaboration between DCFS and Parent Partners. Parent Partners are parents who previously lost custody of their children and have taken the steps necessary to have their children safely returned. Parent Partners work with new parents to facilitate their understanding of an often confusing and challenging system. The first phase of implementation will involve Parent Partners presenting their stories and critical information about how the DCFS system works. These orientations will include a staff member to go over the fine points of DCFS policy including the court process, timelines, visitation, rights, and responsibilities. As implementation progresses, the plan is for Parent Partners to be included in Team Decision Making meetings and individually mentor other parents trying to navigate the system. The first parent orientation class begins October 18, 2007.

The Intensive Services Worker/Psychiatric Social Worker Partner Pilot Program: Implemented in October 2007, this pilot involves DCFS and Department of Mental Health collaborating to create a front-end mental health service delivery system to meet the mental health needs of children and their families who are entering the child welfare system. Specifically, DCFS Intensive Service Workers and DMH Psychiatric Social Workers make home visits together to provide brief crisis counseling and ascertain the mental health needs of children and to link them to appropriate services.

Outreach Activities: Service Bureau 3 offices are actively engaged in their communities to educate the public regarding DCFS' mission and to stay tuned to the changing needs of the communities served. Below is a partial list of various outreach activities:

- Faith-Based Partnerships including workgroups and meetings with community leaders
- Resource Family Recruitment Events
- Community Resource Fair Annual Event
- TDM Training for Community Partners held monthly
- Health and Fitness Seminars for Male Foster Youth
- Health and Beauty Seminars for Female Foster Youth
- Child Abuse Prevention Month Events
- City of Palmdale Neighborhood House Participant
- DCFS/Yucca Elementary School Neighborhood Project
- Education Coalition Initiative with Sunnydale School

Service Planning Area 3 – Glendora and El Monte Offices

DCFS, Spirit Family Services, and First 5 LA as an advisory committee: The Glendora DCFS office has partnered with Spirit Family Services and First 5 LA as an advisory committee. This partnership allows stakeholders (37 represented

organizations) the opportunity to collaborate and develop relationships with the goal of improving the overall quality of programs and services delivered to families. The advisory committee provides a forum for stakeholders to obtain and share information/feedback regarding programs and services from a diverse cross-section of SPA 3.

Eastside Child Abuse Prevention Council: The Glendora office participates with the Eastside Child Abuse Prevention Council. The council is comprised of several community partners and meets quarterly. The council's primary purpose is to coordinate efforts to prevent, educate, and provide public awareness of child abuse and family violence issues. This past year the council coordinated and provided several Mandated Reporter classes to the various community partners, such as the local school districts. The council, in conjunction with Spirit Family Services, Carino, and DCFS, provided training to parents called "Protecting Our Children from Sexual Abuse Parent Workshop". Training regarding Internet Safety was provided to various community partners as well as DCFS staff in order to provide information to the families we serve.

Partnership with Azusa Pacific University: The Glendora and El Monte offices created a partnership with Azusa Pacific University. A joint faith-based event was held last October bringing together members of the ministerial community in the San Gabriel Valley. Present were clergy from the various faiths including Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities. Following this event, the attendees invited their congregants to follow up with community events to learn about adopting, fostering and/or mentoring children served by DCFS. The seven events held within various religious facilities on weekday evenings in the fall of 2006 met the goal of enrolling 70 families to become foster parents.

Another event took place July 2007 through this partnership. The Glendora and El Monte offices hosted a collaborative conference at Azusa Pacific University titled "Connecting for Success." This event was held specifically for teens and their caregivers. Invited guests were children ages 14 and older along with their resource families. The conference focus was on teaching caregivers how they can support the youth to successfully emancipate. The goal was to motivate caregivers and youth to plan for life after high school. The afternoon included an educational fair in which participants from local colleges, junior colleges, Department of Rehabilitation, trade schools, and other post high school opportunities were available to speak with and provide literature to the attendees. Following the event, the youth were provided the opportunity to have a tour of the Azusa Pacific campus as well as to speak to admission staff about the process of applying to college and the benefits available to foster youth.

La Fetra Center Mentoring Program: The Glendora DCFS office and the La Fetra Center, a senior center located in the City of Glendora, is working together to create a mentoring program for DCFS youth who would benefit from a nurturing relationship with a trained senior. This group meets once a month at the senior center. The children are paired with a grandparent and participate in arts and crafts, sports, music and other activities selected to benefit the children. This Senior/Child mentoring program is a pilot. A national organization for senior centers is interested in repeating this program

throughout other facilities.

Open House Christmas celebration: In December 2007, the staff from the El Monte office in concert with a variety of community-based service organizations, including local law enforcement from El Monte Police Department, the local Los Angeles County Fire Department station, and churches, provided an Open House Christmas celebration on site at the El Monte office facility for more than 500 foster care children. The holiday event was designed to provide a demonstration of cooperative efforts by community-based service delivery agencies to support foster children. Activities included lunch, gifts, and carnival activities. SWAT team members from El Monte PD were on hand to demonstrate their tools, and Santa Claus rode into the festivities on an LA County Fire Truck. This effort was a unique example of the broad-based community support and was made possible with the special efforts of the ICAN group who provided monetary donations to facilitate the entire event.

Service Planning Area 3 – Pomona Office

Family First Unit: The Pomona Family First Unit was created as a result of a First District Board Motion calling for an evidence-based best practice unit which would provide intensive services to families with the goal of reducing the length of time children are in foster care, and reducing timelines to permanency. The unit is comprised of six CSWs and one SCSW. Each CSW carries a maximum of 15 cases, which allows staff to provide more intensive services. For example, staff conducts Team Decision Making meetings each time a child needs to be moved to a different home. CSWs facilitate multiple family visits to improve reunification timelines. Staff also facilitates Ice Breakers for families whose children are taken into protective custody. An Ice Breaker is an initial getting to know each other meeting between a foster parent and a biological parent to share information about the child and empower everyone to work together for the benefit of the child and the reunification process.

Improving Education Continuity and School Stability for Children in Out of Home Care Breakthrough Series Collaborative: In November 2006, the Pomona DCFS office and Pomona Unified School District were selected by the Casey Family Program to participate in the Improving Education Continuity and School Stability for Children in Out of Home Care Breakthrough Series Collaborative. This is one of nine jurisdictions nationwide participating in this Collaborative. The methodology involves the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) process which involves small tests of change to improve educational outcomes for children in out-of-home care. The Pomona team is focusing on three specific areas from the framework provided: school stability, empowering youth, families, and community on education rights, and training and education for DCFS and school staff around education stability issues. Thus far, the Pomona DCFS team has conducted a PDSA on a School Stability Checklist. The Pomona School District is conducting a similar PDSA at the target site (San Jose Elementary). The checklists are designed to assist staff in making sure that when a child is moved from school or placement their records follow them and the former and current schools are notified of said move. Another PDSA involves a review of records to ensure that children in out-of home care have registered for free lunch, thus allowing them to access additional services such as tutoring their local schools. The collaborative has

initiated training for school district management and staff to educate them on child abuse reporting laws and to raise awareness regarding the educational needs of children in out-of home care.

The Family Finder Initiative: This program in the Pomona DCFS office involves two Adoption Assistant workers conducting US Searches for families of children who do not have an identified permanent plan. Similar to P-3 workers, Family Finders will be working with front end staff to identify missing biological parents and relatives early on in the case. This affords staff the opportunity to explore additional placements and facilitate alternative permanent plans if reunification is not successful.

Service Planning Area 3 – Pasadena Office

Pasadena City College Advisory Board: The Pasadena DCFS office has collaborated with Pasadena City College's (PCC) Foster/Kinship/ILP services on a number of events for youth and caregivers. Pasadena DCFS office administration and staff serve on the PCC foster care advisory board. DCFS Pasadena and PCC have collaborated to sponsor various conferences and other events for resource parents and youth. In November 2006 and May 2007, Pasadena DCFS and PCC held conferences for youth and resource parents. A number of motivational and educational speakers were present to provide inspiration for the youth, as well as, education for resource parents on services provided within the community. In March 2007, the partnership hosted *Princess for a Day*, an event where female youth ages 16 – 20 were provided with gowns, self-esteem building exercises and grooming, such as professional hair services. In June 2007, another event took place for foster youth with the goal of obtaining youth's experience and suggestions on how DCFS and PCC can improve ILP services for emancipated(ing) youth.

Adopt a Child Abuse Caseworker Program (ACAC): This is a unique partnership between the faith based community in the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding areas, and the Pasadena DCFS office. The ACAC unites DCFS Children's Social Workers with local congregations to provide much needed resources to abused and neglected children and their families. The ACAC participants also assist in the Princess for a Day event via their support and services.

Community Partnerships: The Pasadena DCFS office is involved in several other partnerships including:

- Royal Family Kids Camp program - provides foster youth with the opportunity to attend camp at a nominal fee (or free).
- Birthday Club – youth receive birthday gifts annually (sponsored by All Saint's Church).
- Mentor Program – Connects youth with a supportive adult.
- Angel Tree – Provides youth with an opportunity to receive a Christmas gift.
- Mervyn's Child Spree - Provides back to school clothing for children in foster care between the ages of 6 and 12.
- Thanksgiving Baskets - Food baskets are provided to needy families within the service planning area.

- Starlight Foster Parent Association - Educating foster parents on the new goals and direction of the Department
- Pasadena Alumni Resource Center (PASC) - preparing foster youth for emancipation and providing assistance once emancipated

SSI Pilot Project: The Pasadena DCFS office is planning for the implementation of an SSI Pilot Project. The program is a collaborative between DCFS, local Social Security Administration Offices and the Alliance for Children's Rights. The program will work to improve communication amongst partners and insure that children who qualify for SSI are approved in a timely manner, well before emancipation.

Akoko Nan Parenting Group: This is a collaborative effort between DCFS and Crown City Developments' Black Male Forum of Pasadena, a no/low cost parenting education group for residents with cases in the Pasadena Office. The parenting group has been active since October 2004 with increased membership each year. The classes meet every Thursday Evening at the Community Arms Housing project from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.

The Asian Pacific Project (APP): Implemented in March of 1989, the goals of this program are to improve the quality of services offered to the Asian Pacific population by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate child welfare services to children and families in this community. APP workers carry vertical cases and provide county-wide services to the Asian Pacific population. APP works with Chinatown Service Center and Cambodian Association of America in providing Family Preservation Services to the communities. Currently, APP is staffed to provide services to families with the following languages: Cambodian, Chinese-Cantonese, Chinese-Mandarin (Putonghua), Hmong/Mong, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Tagalog, Tongan and Vietnamese. This program is a one of a kind Asian Pacific Child Protective Services in the United States. During FY 06-07, the number of children served by the program any given month fluctuated between 699 and 840.

Indian Child Welfare Program: The goal of the Indian Child Welfare Program is to provide culturally sensitive services to American Indian families. The program also provides active efforts (to prevent out-of-home care and to reunite families sooner) as required by the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Program staff manages a vertical case file and provide consultation to all DCFS regional offices regarding various aspects of ICWA. In any given month of FY 06-07, the Indian Child Welfare Program served between 168 to 187 children. The program partners with the following community services and forums:

- United American Indian Involvement, Inc, Seven Generations of Care - provides a full array of culturally competent mental health and support services organized into a coordinated network in order to meet the unique clinical and functional needs of American Indian children, youth and families.
- Torres-Martinez Tribal Assistance for Needy Families - helps tribal families achieve self-sufficiency and independence.
- American Indian Counseling Center - A clinic of the Los Angeles County

Department of Mental Health providing culturally sensitive mental health services to American Indian elders, adults, children and families.

- Native American Indian Commission - promotes the development of programs and funding resources to serve urban American Indians and American Indian organizations.
- American Indian Children's Council - plans, coordinates and facilitates public/private decision-making to achieve specific results for American Indian Children.

Juvenile Court Services (JCS): Juvenile Court Services provides intermediary services between DCFS and the Superior Court of California – Dependency Court system. The Dependency Court imposes legal rulings for the dependent children under DCFS supervision throughout Los Angeles County which are administered at the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court and Antelope Valley Court. JCS provides comprehensive court-related services. Working in concert with regional offices and County Counsel, JCS ensures the provision of legal sufficiency and application of Federal and State laws in all court matters and cases.

Intake and Detention Control (IDC) Children's Social Workers establish the legal basis for the detention of children and file petitions on behalf of all detained children. The IDC section also manages the DCFS Child Abduction Program and represents DCFS on the inter-agency task force tasked with the recovery of abducted dependent children.

The 241.1 Unit monitors cases that fall under both the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 300 Dependency Court and WIC Section 600 Delinquency Court system.

Court Transportation staff provides transportation to and from the courthouses for children placed in unrelated out-of-home care and in psychiatric facilities to attend calendared appearance court hearings. Transportation services were provided to 16,456 children during the 2007 calendar year.

Shelter Care provides supportive child care services and structured educational and enrichment activities. Programs afforded court children include community performing arts, museum/zoo presentations, literacy, (partnering with the federal Reading Is Fundamental book program), and educational and career development. During FY 06-07 Shelter Care and Court Transportation served an average of 1381 children monthly. Shelter Care staff monitor a monthly average of 650 court-approved after court visits between children and their families. Over 300 newly detained children in Shelter Care are photographed, with their photographs being placed in their legal court files and the Department's case record.

SERVICE BUREAU 4

Service Bureau 4 provides services throughout Service Planning Areas 2 and 5. In addition, the Kinship Support Division, the Community Based Support Division, the Runaway Outreach Unit and the Deaf Services Units, also fall under the auspices of Service Bureau 4.

Kinship Support Division

Kinship Care Services: This program provides direct emergent and support services and resources to families in crisis. The primary goal of the Department is to maintain the family unit. However, when this is not possible, the secondary goal is to reunify the family as quickly as safely possible or develop alternate permanent living and care arrangements for the child. Kinship placements are the first choice for children that cannot remain in or return to their birth families.

Kinship Care Resource Centers: Services provided include information and referral, emergency assistance, respite and recreational, support groups, relative home assessments and approvals, relative caregiver training and other activities both for caregivers and children. The families served may have open child welfare service cases or the children may be at risk of entering the child welfare system.

Kinship Education, Preparation, & Support (KEPS): KEPS is a no-cost training program for formal kinship care providers in Los Angeles County. The Program strives to assist kinship care providers in, (a) Meeting the safety, emotional and developmental needs of the child(ren) placed in their care; (b) Learning how to work with local school systems and other educational resources; (c) Supporting adolescents in achieving successful emancipation; (d) Joining an ongoing informal social support network made up of relative caregivers; and, (e) Understanding "the DCFS System", including: ASFA guidelines, the approval process, the language and protocol of the Court process, concurrent planning and permanence.

Community Based Support Division

Family Preservation Program: Family Preservation is an integrated, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk or who are already experiencing problems in family functioning, with the goal of assuring the emotional, social, educational and spiritual development of children in a safe and nurturing environment.

Upfront Assessments: The goal of the program is to prevent unnecessary foster placement through more thorough investigation and assessment. In this program social workers call upon agencies with expertise in the areas of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Domestic Violence to provide comprehensive assessments and connect families to treatment and ancillary services in the community. The expertise that these agencies provide to social workers allows them to make more informed case decisions,

and allow children to be safely maintained in their homes.

Victims of Crime Program: Victims of Crime provides compensation to Children who the Department of Children and Family Services has jurisdiction over and who qualifies for reimbursement for specified expenses directly related to a crime and not reimbursable by any other resources.

Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP): *(This project is in the final planning stages)* The PIDP requires contractors to work in partnership with families and communities, the public and private sector, the faith-based community, and all related county departments. Contractors are required to: (1) provide Community Building; (2) provide Social Networking; (3) encourage Community Organizing; (4) provide Family Support; (5) assist with Institutional Transformation; (6) promote Early Care and Education; (7) assist with Youth Development; (8) promote Treatment Services; and (9) assist with Child Protection/Case Management. The goal of the PIDP is to keep children safe from harm and prevent families from entering and re-entering the County's health and human services system through a community approach. The three outcomes are: (1) Create healthier communities; (2) Create stronger families; and (3) Ensure children thrive.

Family Support (FS): Family Support/Promoting Safe and Stable Families services are community-based services that promote the well-being of children and families. The program is designed to increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families), to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, and to afford children a stable and supportive family environment, and otherwise enhance child development. Family Support is a proactive approach towards the prevention of family problems. During fiscal year 2005-2006 Family Support served a total of 17933 adults and children. During fiscal year 2006-2007 Family Support provided services to a total of 16789 adults and children.

PSSF Time-Limited Family Reunification (TLFR): The intent of these services is to connect DCFS families with timely, intensive, and responsive support services in order to shorten the time it takes for them to reunite with their children, who have been in placement 15 months or less. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Alcohol and Drug Assessment and Treatment services with Department of Health Services (DHS) is designed to enhance the availability of alcohol and drug assessment and treatment services for DCFS families who are eligible to receive PSSF Time-Limited Family Reunification services. During the 2006-2007 fiscal year a total of 497 out patient and 315 in-patient parents and caregivers were provided treatment by this program.

Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment (CAPIT): CAPIT services are divided into "Comprehensive Services" and "Discretionary Services". Comprehensive Services consist of individual, family and group counseling, in-home services, case management services, parenting education and support groups, 24 hour telephone availability to agency's clients, and outreach to promote child safety, empower families and identify at-risk families. Discretionary Services consist of one or more of the services listed above being provided, but not the provision of all services listed,

preferably at a single location. The overall goal of CAPIT is to ensure that at-risk families with young children receive timely and accessible services. CAPIT DCFS served a total of 25,144 children and adults during the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

CAPIT Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Department of Mental Health (DMH): The MOU between DCFS and DMH is designed to extend mental health services available through the CAPIT program to eligible clients by accessing Title XIX Medi-Cal. DCFS provides DMH funding for CAPIT services to enable DMH to claim Federal entitlement dollars.

Subsidized Child Care Program: The criteria for eligibility in the DCFS Child Care program are families where children are “at-risk” of abuse and/or neglect. Customer groups include birth parents and relative caregivers. The caregivers must have a qualifying need for services. For example, when the social worker/court has mandated that the parent engage in parenting classes and/or therapy to help ensure that the family stabilizes, DCFS pays for childcare while they are involved in these court ordered activities.

If the child is placed in the home of a relative caregiver who works, DCFS can pay for infant-toddler, pre-school, and/or before and after school care. To help ensure a high level of quality and safety, DCFS utilizes only State licensed childcare providers. DCFS fully expended this grant in FY 2005-06 and served 4,862 children, and expended 90% allocation for FY 2006-07. Last fiscal year we served 4,897 children. Sixty-two percent of DCFS families choose family day care, while 38% choose center-based care. Fifty-six percent needed full-time care, 44% needed part-time care. Forty-one percent of children in care are 0-2, thirty-nine are ages 2-5, and twelve are ages 6 and older.

Enhanced Family Visitation: The goal of the Enhanced Family Visitation Implementation Proposal is to improve timelines to permanency through safe reunification or implementation of an alternative permanent plan. Three key objectives will help DCFS meet this goal: (a) Training to increase DCFS staff/Community knowledge and skill level related to visitation; (b) Development of the Family Visitation Plan, which would pilot a more structured practice for family visitation planning that would include developing a detailed family visitation plan through focused discussion at TDM meetings and icebreakers; and, (c) Development of Family Visitation Resources maximizing existing resources for the offices involved in the pilot.

When out of home care is necessary, visitation should serve as a family-centered, family empowering activity to assess, maintain, strengthen and rebuild healthy family and community connections while reducing identified risks. It not only serves to maintain contact/access between parents and children, but also allows family members to practice and demonstrate new skills/behaviors that are needed for them to safely be together. Across time, if reunification is found not to be possible, visitation allows parents, children and caregivers to be more directly and actively engaged in the concurrent planning process to support timely development and activation of an alternative permanent plan

Education Consultants: On March 13, 2007, the Board of Supervisors approved the Form Contract for the provision of Education Consultant Services by fifteen (15) individual providers. The Education Consultants are to be housed in regional offices to assist the CSWs and caregivers in addressing the more challenging educational issues faced by our youth. These issues include timely enrollment, Individual Education Programs (IEP), disciplinary actions such as expulsions and suspensions especially without regard for due process procedures, and school of origin issues mandated by AB490.

CAPTA Implementation Plan: The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) mandates a referral for a developmental screening/assessment for children, birth to 36 months, with a substantiated allegation of child abuse or neglect. In California, these developmental services are available through the Regional Center's Early Start Programs. DCFS is collaborating with State and Regional Center representatives, with input from community partners, to develop an implementation plan for CAPTA. Currently, the Collaborative is meeting to, revise the Regional Center referral form, establish the role of the CSW, PHN, and DCFS Regional Center Liaisons, and integrate existing programs, in order to screen every young child for indicators of developmental delays. The goal is to establish a systematic process to refer the child to Regional Center for a comprehensive assessment to determine eligibility and provide services through the Early Start Program.

Increasing Preschool Enrollment: An ongoing stakeholder workgroup consisting of various community and county representatives, including First 5 LA, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), County Office of Childcare, Education Coordinating Council, and other affected community groups, is developing a plan to provide access for all children 3 and 4 years of age to attend preschool or quality child care. A survey has been developed to learn the reasons why preschool aged youth are not currently enrolled in an early education program so these hurdles can be overcome. This information, coupled with already existing information about early education and childcare resources will enable DCFS to develop direct methods to allow more DCFS children to be enrolled in early education opportunities, and better prepare them for entry into formal school at kindergarten.

Promoting Free Tutoring Opportunities: In Partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District and other districts within Los Angeles County, the department is engaging in the ongoing promotion and facilitation of enrollment countywide into the free tutoring opportunities available for students enrolled in Program Improvement Schools and participating in the free and reduced lunch programs through the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. Promotion is accomplished through presentation at general staff meetings, in-service training for caregivers, kinship community network meetings and support groups, community forums, as well as postings on LAKids and e-mail notifications to relevant stakeholders.

Education Programs: The Education Unit is participating in two projects with Casey Family Programs. The first one is a nationwide Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Improving Educational Continuity and School Stability for Children in Out-of-Home Care.

The Pomona office along with the Pomona Unified School District work together to improve the educational outcomes for the youth shared by the two agencies. Several cycles of small-scale tests of changes (PDSAs) are developed and tested in order to generate a body of evidence-based work to identify promising practices for improving educational continuity and school stability for children in out-of-home care.

The second project is the Path to Success for Foster Youth. Casey Family Programs (CFP), Neighborhood Based Prevention Initiative. The Education Unit has been invited to participate to help CFP reduce the number of children and youth in foster care by 50% nationally and ensure that all foster youth have their mental health, education and employment needs met.

No Fault Library Card for Foster Youth: DCFS has partnered with the Los Angeles County Library and the Pasadena Public Library to offer “No-Fault” library cards to foster youth. This program encourages caregivers of foster youth to bring the children into the library to sign them up for their library card, and stipulates that any overdue or lost book fees will be absorbed by the library and/or DCFS. The program alleviates the concern of relative caregivers or foster parents of not allowing their children to obtain a library card for fear of being responsible for overdue and lost book charges. Additional community libraries in Los Angeles County are being recruited to partner with DCFS to provide similar “no-fault” cards to children.

317e Panel Partnership with Juvenile Court: Developed with the judges at Juvenile Court, the Children’s Law Center and DCFS to address special education needs for children identified with learning disabilities. This partnership provides for additional attention to the educational needs to ensure that they are enrolled in adequate programs to address their learning disability. The 317e panel reviews cases referred to them and, in appropriate cases, advocates to the court for specific court orders to address the needs of the child.

Partnership with Education Coordinating Council (ECC): The Education and Mentoring Unit is partnering with the Los Angeles County ECC to address specific and global education issues. The ECC is currently working with the Department on an initiative to provide access to preschool and quality child care opportunities for children 3 and 4 years of age; community outreach to involve DCFS youth in various youth development services (tutoring, mentoring, other personal education enhancement services), and other educational issues affecting foster youth in Los Angeles County.

Partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE):

- **School Attendance Review Board Committee:** Collaboration of school personnel, DCFS and Law Enforcement to address global school attendance issues in Torrance. Systemic problems, resolution of those issues, development of recommendations to increase and improve school attendance within the district.
- **Foster Youth Services Steering Committee:** Bi-monthly partnership to discuss educational needs of youth in group homes and foster care, as well as, services

that foster youth counselors at FYS are providing. The committee identifies needs in the community and the Department revolving around education and seeks to find remedies or solutions to identified barriers in the education system, and specifically issues relating to foster youth.

Partnership with the ABC Unified School District Safe Schools:

- ***Healthy Students Grant:*** This initiative has a full-time CSW stationed at various ABC Unified District schools as a resource for community services. The purpose is to identify, advocate and provide resources to youth and families who may be “at-risk” of requiring DCFS services. The intervention is administered in a multidisciplinary program to avert possible entry into the system by linking youth and families with appropriate support systems. Last year’s efforts enabled the assigned CSW to work with families in a preventative manner and keep approximately 40 children out of the dependency system. The Department’s participation in the program helps to build stronger community ties and goodwill.

Mentoring Program: The Department’s Mentoring Program strives to build community partnerships that will provide foster youth with the opportunity to establish relationships with positive, caring adults who will expand their childhood experiences and strengthen their ability to transition into independent adulthood. The mentoring program targets the development of mentoring relationships in three phases by collaborating with existing mentoring organizations and cultivating additional mentoring resources within the community. The target population includes the following: (a) All DCFS dependents (ten years and older) living in group homes for more than two years, who do not have a family member identified for reunification or long-term relative care and have a written assessment showing this need; (b) Children placed with FFAs who have voluntarily established mentoring programs (as a pilot); (c) All Probation youth (16 years and older) placed in group homes who do not have a family member identified for reunification or long-term relative care; and, (d) ILP eligible high school seniors who could benefit from “Senior Sponsor” support as they transition from foster care (Test in SPA 8).

Partnership for Families (PFF): Is a First 5 LA initiative, with a \$50 million allocation for five years, to prevent child abuse and neglect. PFF was implemented in 2006. First 5 LA linked with DCFS to identify families with children 5 years of age and younger, and at risk of child abuse and neglect. The goal of PFF is to increase the safety and survival of children in Los Angeles County. As a prevention initiative, PFF is designed to create opportunities for families, communities and County Departments to meaningfully participate in the prevention of child maltreatment.

Runaway Outreach Unit (ROU): The Runaway Outreach Unit is a countywide specialized program designed to locate, stabilize and reduce the recidivism of the AWOL population within the Department. It is designed to work with the hard to place runaway and disenfranchised youth that have felt the need to live there lives apart from the system and away from the rules and regulations that foster care presents. The program is designed to assist case carrying CSWs with locating, placing and stabilizing AWOL youth when all of their efforts have been exhausted or have failed. The program

works with youth between the ages of 11-17 years of age or older as long as they are still dependents of the juvenile dependency system. RAP workers will assist in locating and developing client centered case plans and services that are central to stabilizing this population. The program works very closely with the P3 Program and a great deal of community based partnerships that provide case management services, mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and educational vocational services to this high-risk population. The RAP program can also provide technical assistance and/or training to CSWs and caregivers in areas related to the runaway population.

Over the past year of operation the program has provided runaway related services to approximately 150 dependent youth who were either out of care for long periods of time or were repeat chronic runaways. The program has been effective in replacing and stabilizing approximately 75 of these youth with another 25 youth successfully emancipating through the system.

Deaf Services Unit: This unit provides the full range of public child welfare services (from Emergency Response to Permanency Planning) for abused/at risk deaf children, their hearing siblings and their deaf or hearing parents. The DSU staff is representative of the deaf, partially hearing, and hearing communities. Sign language interpreters are utilized, as case situations require.

Stuart House: Stuart House is an innovative facility established by the Rape Treatment Center (RTC) of Santa Monica – UCLA Medical Center working in conjunction with the Department of Children & Family Services providing assistance, assessment and treatment for children who are suspected victims of sexual abuse. Stuart house is a one stop service center where child victims can receive needed medical, legal, and counseling services in a single location providing a therapeutic environment for children. It brings together, in one facility, a Multidisciplinary Investigative/Interview Team (MDT) comprised of criminal justice, law enforcement, and child protective services personnel.

Adopt a Child Abuse Caseworker (ACAC) Program: An office-based program designed to build structured relationships between congregations of all faiths and civic organizations and DCFS social workers. The purpose is to foster fellowship within the community these congregations/organizations “adopting” a professional social worker to help provide much needed resources to assist abused, neglected and impoverished children on their caseloads. This is a voluntary program between DCFS social workers and community groups, to enhance support to children and families that we service. Additionally, the ACAC program also sponsors various events throughout the year for the children and families on our caseloads, such as the Prom Prep Day, Mervyn’s Back-to-school Shopping Spree, Halloween Party, Holiday (Christmas) Party, etc. During calendar years 2005-6 and 2006-7 this program serviced approximately 1650 children.

Probation Services (Includes the Community Based, Specialized Units and Youth Development Services)	
Placement Permanency Unit	This unit receives and assesses all cases referred by DCFS, delinquency court, Probation Officers, Attorneys, Child Advocates and the Placement Quality Assurance process. All cases are investigated for parents' whereabouts, relatives/non-relative extended family and life-long connections. Each permanency officer carries a caseload of 6-8 and meets with the DCFS/Probation Collaborative Permanency Committee monthly to discuss all cases destined for legal guardianship and adoption. Currently, the committee is working on 3 potential adoptions and 3 potential legal guardianships.
Mentoring Model	This is a new program that will begin July 2008 and will handle 800 DCFS and Probation foster youth, approximately 100 per SPA. This program is for youth 16 or older where family reunification has failed for the purpose of obtaining life-long connections for these aging-out youth.
Transition to Permanency	This program is for youth 18-25 years who have had contact with the criminal justice system as a juvenile or an adult and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The program will provide financial assistance with rent, moving costs and appliance. The youth must be employed or willing to be employed, and the program will assist with finding the youth shelter until they are employed. This is the first project that both the adult and juvenile are working on together.
Placement Community Transition Services	This unit identifies youth eligible for Evidence-Based In-Home Services (FFT and MST) and assists in transitioning these youth out of Group Home care and back into the home of their parents. The PCTS Unit supervises these youth in community and works with the therapist to support the success of the intervention.

241.1 Dual Supervision Unit	This juvenile dual supervision unit supervises minors under legal jurisdiction of DCFS. Through the Dependency Court, minors are placed on court-ordered probation, receive joint supervision and case management services from both DCFS and Probation.
Placement On-Site Program	The On-Site Program is a special supervision strategy that involves DPOs being housed on the grounds of a group-home. The On-Site DPO works exclusively with youth placed in that group home and is available daily to provide intensive supervision and is part of the treatment team.
Transitional Independent Living Plan Unit	This unit ensures that all TILP reports are completed within 30 days of a youth being ordered into a suitable placement. This unit is responsible for Probation's Placement Unit high compliance rate in this area.
Youth Development Services	YDS is a federally funded program that offers supplemental and linkage services and/or direct funds for DCFS/Probation foster youth or former foster you who are ILP eligible. Youth 16 to 20 years old are eligible for ILP services if they were in foster care at any time from their 16 th to 19 th birthday.
Project Youth Embrace	This programs involves the community-based organization, Prototypes Counseling Centers, who collaborates with Homeboys Industries and the Public Defenders, to provide services to females 18 years or older who are graduating from camp with the goal of successful transition to the community. This program also services those females graduating from Youth Authority.
High Risk/High Needs Home Based Services	This is an employment program that is a home-based service for youth released from camp and based on the LARRC score to promote family bonding, communication and parent involvement in school.

High Risk/High Needs Employment Services	This is a job training program to assist youth in obtaining employment through a 12-hour module with immediate employment or apprenticeship upon completion of the course.

Appendix IV: Agency Collaborations

County C&F-Related Bodies/Cmtes.	Mission	Brief Description	Brief Description of Membership	Top 5 Outcomes Over Last Three Years
A Better LA	The goal is to create a new normal for our youth; a change that will bring about a life with goals and a bright future instead of one filled with despair and the pressure to succumb to a negative environment.	Community and government agencies working and training together to speak a common language of hope to reduce gang violence.	DCFS, CBO, and School District	Shared vision and common goals to reduce gang participation. Fairly new program and therefore too early to provide specific outcomes.
Adopt A Child Abuse Caseworkers (ACAC)	The purpose is to foster fellowship while sharing love with your community. By adopting a professional social worker the congregation/organization can help provide much needed resources to assist abused, neglected and impoverished children, which will help to relieve the stress of abuse.	ACAC is a program of the Los Angeles County DCFS that is designed to build structured relationships between religious congregations and various community organizations. Social Workers voluntarily participate in this program and are eager to work with the religious community to make them aware of the needs of the children within his/her caseload. Social Workers educate the group about child abuse prevention and give members the opportunity to help desperately needy children in the community.	Civic, educational groups and congregations of all faiths are very active and supportive of the program. Organizations such as the Rotary Club, North Hollywood High School, The Country School, Wells Fargo, Foothill Division, Mervyns, Starbucks, Westfield Shopping Center, Riverside Mall, Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association, Warner Brothers Inc., and Starz Entertainment are also involved.	These groups have provided the following: 1) Seniors graduating from High School with prom dresses, shoes, jewelry, and make-up. 2) Back to school clothing through Mervyn's shopping spree. 3) Holiday event distributing Christmas gifts for over 1,500 children. 4) Birthday gifts and school supplies. 5) Thanksgiving baskets and food throughout the year. 6) Children's clothing, baby items, bedding, blankets, children's books, dressers, toys, and furniture, etc.

Agency-Court Cooperation	Increase partnerships between court and other organizations that interface with the juvenile court systems in an effort to improve service delivery to abused children and delinquent youth.	Monthly meetings to discuss programs that are being developed to service the needs of children and youth	Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court, DCFS, Probation, DMH, County Counsel, other legal representatives	Increase awareness of agency resources which serve the youth and families.
All Children, All Families Advisory Board	Enhance and improve upon the adoption services provided to clients in the gay and lesbian community	This advisory board meets at least once a year and has monthly conference calls. Members of the Board are nationally recognized experts in the field of adoption and share expertise with each other to improve the practices in the gay and lesbian community. The goal is to share this knowledge and expertise with all licensed adoption agencies nationwide.	Approximately 20 nationally-recognized experts in the field of adoption.	The Advisory Board was formed in late 2007. DCFS invited to participate just a few months ago. Since beginning participation, a Best Practices Guide to Adoption in the gay and lesbian community has been developed and distribution of the guide has begun. A plan to provide a "seal of approval" to those agencies that meet specific competencies in their practice has been developed.
Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC)	Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) on Improving Education Continuity and School Stability for Children in out of Home Care. The mission of the BSC is to identify, develop, test, implement and spread strategies for improving practice in the education and child welfare system to support educational continuity and school stability for children in out-of-home care.	The BSC is part of a nationwide breakthrough series collaborative on Education sponsored by Casey Family Programs. Locally, it is a partnership between the Pomona DCFS office, Pomona Unified School District and Casey Family Programs that comes together twice per month to share knowledge, strategies, challenges and successes regarding the improvement of practice related to education between the local school and child welfare systems.	Membership of the BSC is comprised of a senior leader (DCFS Pomona's RA & PUSD Assistant Superintendent). The core team consists of staff from DCFS and PUSD including direct services staff and management level staff. Most importantly, there is representation from birth parents & emancipated foster youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a strong working relationship with PUSD that allows us to trouble-shoot departmental, and individual educational issues. Developed a check-transfer list of children in foster care that are changing school to facilitate the transfer of records, to facilitate enrollment. Provided ongoing training sessions to PUSD staff regarding the implementation of AB490 and common educational issues faced by foster children. Developed a protocol for directly inputting educational information into the CWS/CMS system.. Developing a more user-friendly approach to communicating educational rights information to birth parents and youth.

California Association of Adoption Agencies	To promote consistent, best-practice provision of adoption services in California.	This is a public private partnership covering California that joins together to educate, advocate, collaborate, and set standards and influence policy and legislation.	Public and Private agencies throughout all of California.	Introduced legislation, supported legislation, hosted an adoption conference.
California Permanency for Youth - Legislative and Policy Workgroup	Enhance and improve upon the current legislation and regulations in the area of permanency for youth	This workgroup meets at least quarterly to review current legislation and regulations as well as proposed legislation. The group is also in the process of determining what legislation will enhance the achievement of youth permanence and should be put forth. The group also interacts with CDSS to discuss current regulations that impact youth permanence.	Approximately 15 experts in the field of youth permanence from the State of California.	This workgroup was just formed about three months ago and has only met once so far.
Casey Family Programs - Prevention Initiative	To support DCFS' 12-month Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project as part of HST	CFP provides technical and consultation support in the areas of evaluation, communication, and capacity building.	Casey Family Program and DCFS.	Support DCFS' three main outcomes: less reliance on out-of-home care, expedite timelines to permanency and increase safety of children in placement.
Child Welfare Directors Association Adoption Sub-Committee	Improve communication and coordination between public adoption agencies in Southern California. Review and analysis of pending legislation.	This is a quarterly meeting attended by the County Adoption program managers from throughout the State of California. Issues of concern regarding the current regulations, laws and practice in the field of adoption are discussed.	County Adoption Program Managers	Review of the AAP White Paper and forwarding to CWDA for review; review and discussion regarding a variety of legislative bills that include recommendations to CWDA regarding revisions; clarification of AAP regulations; provided input on the revision of the ARM rates for Regional Center clients; input to CDSS regarding necessary revisions to the Division 31 Adoption Regulations.

Children's Deputies Monthly Meeting	The Children's Services Deputies provide liaison between the Department of Children and Family Services and the Board of Supervisors.	The Deputies are charged with identifying any areas of concern, gathering data and facilitating resolution of any concerns and advocating for new initiatives. As well, the Deputies work as liaisons for the Department in connecting to the Board of Supervisors for appropriate and needed information with detail to ensure adequate education for these initiatives is obtained prior to voting.)	The Deputies are appointed by the five members of the Board of Supervisors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assisting in analyzing and advocating for an appropriate budget for the Department. 2. Regularly scheduled meetings to assist the Department's managers in innovative programming and better ways to meet the needs of our children and families. 3. Serving as liaisons between the Department and the Board's constituents in problem resolution to ensure strong relationships between the Department and the community. 4. Transmitted supervisorial suggested plans/programs and ensured results. 5. Advocated for the needs of the Department.
Commission for Children and Families	Enhancing the well being of the children and families of Los Angeles County.	Advises the Board in areas of child welfare and family policy.	Each of the 5 Board Offices appoints three members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted DCFS in receiving Transitional Age Youth funding through the Mental Health Services Act. • Assisted the Reunification Committee with development of a comprehensive visitation policy. • Assisted DCFS in developing a plan to strengthen faith-based collaboration within communities perhaps to include visitation sites. • Assisted Department in ensuring that relative caregivers receive necessary supportive services. • Working closely with DCFS in developing preventive strategies for referred families.

Community Champions Network	To enhance and improve the services to adoptive families and children.	A collaboration between NACAC and DCFS Post Adoption Services and various community partners. Meetings held in Los Angeles County during Feb. 28, 2007 to March 3, 2007. Further communication has been through e-mails and telephonic conferences.	Los Angeles County DCFS Adoptions and adoptive families and private adoption agencies.	Establishment of local Post Adoption Services (PAS) stakeholders group and service; needs identifications; NACAC received a grant from the Jockey Corporation to improve PAS in areas around the county, including Los Angeles.
Compton Citywide Safety Coalition	Reduce youth violence in schools and communities, provide parenting services and resources.	Focus on needs of local youth and addressing dependency issues.	DCFS, Probation, DMH, School Safety Police, and civic-minded citizens.	Improved school attendance for DCFS and community children. Increased safety for children in route to and from school. Reduced incidences of violence on school campuses and in proximity to the local schools. Increased parental involvement within the school system.
Compton Community Advocacy Council	To provide an environment wherein the community stakeholders can make a positive contribution in the delivery of timely quality child welfare services by the Compton office to the children and families of our community.	Provides oversight and community involvement on issues pertaining to dependent youth (DCFS programs, policies and legislation, etc).	DCFS, community agencies (i.e. Shields for Families), law enforcement and civic-minded citizens.	Improved and expedited services for the children and families serviced by the Compton office. Increased resources and information sharing to identify areas of need. Stronger collaboration between the Compton DCFS office and the Compton/Watts community.
Compton/Watts Interfaith Advisory Council	To collaborate, facilitate and provide resources and services of the faith-based communities to create a safety net for Compton/Watts and neighboring communities to keep families safe and united.	Coordinated involvement by the local faith-based community in the provision of services, resources, and support to children and families.	DCFS, local churches within the Compton/Watts communities, Project Impact and West Los Angeles Church.	Increased community participation and awareness. Establishment of good working relationships with community agencies (i.e. Project Impact and Shields for Families, etc.) that have led to increased and expedited services for our children and families.

Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC)	Working to end gang violence through communication, collaboration and coordination.	Forging a link between law enforcement and community-based organizations to reduce gang violence in LA County.	BOS, DCFS, Law Enforcement, Probation, Parole, District Attorney, Education and city/county representation.	Improved collaboration between city, county and child welfare agencies and law enforcement. Increased awareness and sensitivity to child abuse by law enforcement personnel. Successful coordination of Anti-Gang Conferences.
DCFS Prevention Committee	To develop a comprehensive prevention model through a Family Support Collaborative Model.	DCFS' prevention workgroup is designed to bring together both internal and external stakeholders throughout the county to partner and collaborate about efforts to prevent child maltreatment countywide.	A comprehensive cross-section of internal and external stakeholders across Los Angeles County.	Support DCFS's three main outcomes: less reliance on out-of-home care, expedite timelines to permanency and increase safety of children in placement.
DCFS/DMH/HUB Workgroup	To ensure that high-risk children and those 0-3 years of age receive comprehensive medical, developmental, and mental health assessments.	Addressing problems with children being referred to HUB's and securing appropriate health and mental health evaluation and services.	DCFS and DMH	Increased efficiency and timely services for high-risk children. Increased awareness of HUB services and increased referral to the HUB. Early intervention and appropriate case planning for children with special needs.
DCFS-Child Support Services Department (CSSD) Interagency Work Group	To promote the well-being of children and the self-sufficiency of families by assisting both parents to meet the financial, medical, and emotional needs of their children through the delivery of quality child support establishment, collection and distribution of services.	Goal is to establish more effective data exchange between DCFS and CSSD and improve the DCFS assessment for child support referrals to CSSD.	DCFS and CSSD	The revision of current DCFS policy, procedures, forms, training and data sharing between DCFS and CSSD. The workgroup planned the DPSS-DCFS Joint Summit.
Domestic Violence Council	The Council provides leadership in the creation and support of a victim-centered, countywide, and coordinated approach to prevent and respond to domestic violence.	On April 29, 1979 the Board of Supervisors established the Domestic Violence Council. It facilitates interdepartmental coordination of services, reviews legislation, and serves as a forum to raise public awareness of services and develop strategies with the public and private sectors to stem the incidence of domestic violence.	The Council is comprised of members from shelter agencies, community groups, the courts, law enforcement, the City Attorney's office, Public Defender, Health Services and other County agencies,	As SB1 attendance has been less than a year, we don't have the info for the last three years. However, current projects include: 1) GERDA and 2) Project STAR

Education Committee Meeting	Improved educational outcomes for teens to increase the likelihood of college attendance and workforce productivity.	Goal is to monitor the progress of 25 youth (9th-11th grades) to ensure successful high school graduation.	DCFS and LA Unified School District	Fairly new program and therefore too early to provide outcomes.
Education Coordinating Council	Ensuring that all youth in the foster care system have a high-quality education that prepares them for adult success.	The ECC is composed of agency and department education leaders throughout County.	7 major Los Angeles area School Districts, social service agencies, Probation Dept., philanthropic organizations, community partnerships	<p>* Obtained a fee waiver from Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) for foster parents, parents whose children are under the auspices of DCFS, and teen parents in the foster care or juvenile justice systems;</p> <p>* Developed a sample Educational Case Plan for DCFS and Probation youth and outlined the responsibilities of the departments, caregivers, and the court for implementing these plans;</p> <p>* Brokered a process for ensuring improved access of foster and probation youth to the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Beyond the Bell after-school programs;</p> <p>* Secured a blanket order from the Juvenile Court permitting DCFS and Probation to share information on their youth with the seven school districts that are members of the ECC</p> <p>* Facilitated a preliminary data match between LAUSD and DCFS that collected descriptive statistics and initial academic achievement data on foster youth.</p>

Emancipation Program Partnership	To improve the live of transition age foster youth through public private partnership.	YDS participates in the Youth Development. Services Partnership formally known as the Emancipation Program Partnership (EPP).	YDS co-chairs this monthly mtg. In partnership w/ CEO-SIB and Probation. Membership includes: Commission (Trish Curry), DMH, Casey, ASCHSA, UFC, Public Counsel, Juvenile Court, Judge Stephens, CLC, Leslie Hemiov, DPSS, DHS, Foster Parent rep., Community Dev. Comm., CYC and DCFS Ombudsman.	1. Successfully encouraged DMH to develop a TAY catagory for MHSA. 2. Generated a partnership to improve services to Transitional Age Youth. 3. Developed Youth Transaction Action Teams (YTAT) resulting in 80 foster youth participating in the Mayor's Hire LA Summer Employment 2007. 4. Developed Foster Youth Speakers Bureau as a result Speak Outs in partnership w/ Calif Youth Connection. 5. Two youth from the Speakers will be attending the first annual Foster Youth Career Development and Employment Summit.
Faith Based Partnerships	Increase partnerships between faith-based and other organizations in order to better serve and strengthen the community	Faith-based organizations meet with private and public agencies to discuss the needs of children, families and the community and partner together to respond to needs.	Faith-based organizations and DCFS.	Increased blending of resources to meet community needs and needs of families served by DCFS. Develop strategies to improve quality of life for families.
Family Builders Network	Enhance and improve upon the adoption practice throughout the Country	This is an annual face-to-face three day meeting as well as monthly conference calls. National experts in the field of adoptions share knowledge and best practices.	Approximately 15 nationally-recognized experts in the field of adoption.	First year that DCFS has been invited to participate. Family Builders has the contract for California Kids Connection and we have made matches.

Family to Family Anchor Site	A commitment to working with biological and resource families and the local community to improve outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system, with an emphasis on safety, stability, permanence and overall well being.	Serve as one of eight model sites for family to family implementation. As a model site, Pomona has an established community council, four strategy workgroups (including a self evaluation, team-decision-making, community partnership, and recruitment, development & support of resource families group). Each workgroup has monthly meetings to strategize on their specific area of focus. In addition, three of the workgroups have integrated work to reduce racial disparity and disproportionality.	DCFS Staff of all levels, biological parents, and resource families. Community Partners including county agencies, service providers, community advocates. Casey Technical Assistants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a community council, four strategy workgroups. Involvement of DCFS direct services staff, P3 staff, Family First, RPRT and other programs to continue to focus on: a) Reducing the number of children placed away from birth families; b) Continued work on reducing the number of children placed in group home care; c) Increasing the number of children reunified with their parents. Provided training to raised awareness/involvement on the issue of racial disproportionality and disparity.
Family To Family/Community Partnership	A collaboration among DCFS and their community partners to ensure the successful integration of Family To Family and other departmental initiatives.	Focus on self-evaluation of services, Team Decision-Making, Resource Development, Education and Faith-Based services.	DCFS, DMH, Probation, Law Enforcement, Education, etc,	Increased parental and extended family involvement in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Increased community participation and awareness. Establishment of good working relationships with community agencies that have led to increased and expedited services for our children and families.
Florence-Firestone Task Force	To address community safety, adequate housing and local resources for children and families.	Independent committee to address issues and provide solutions to matters of safety and stability for local families.	DCFS, Sheriff, Housing, BOS representatives, Probation, CBO's, etc.	Increased knowledge of and availability to resources accessible to children and families serviced by city and county agencies.
Foster Care Awareness Campaign Committee	To engage the community to participate for better outcomes for Foster Youth	To bring attention to the need for community support for LA County Foster Youth	Children's Law Center, LA Superior Court, LA Children's Planning Council, Casey Family Programs.	Billboard advertisement, expanded the awareness of the need of Foster Youth both locally and Nationally
ICWA Committee	Develop a protocol/reference manual to guide ICWA practice in the Juvenile Dependency and Delinquency systems.	This is a committee of the Superior Court of California Juvenile Division. It is chaired by Referee Sherri Sobel who hears most ICWA cases.	Superior Court, Probation, DCFS, American Indian Organizations and Tribes, LA Dependency Lawyers, Office of the County Counsel, Department of Mental Health, District Attorney Office, California State University Los Angeles, American Indian Children's Council, UCLA School of Law, etc.	Increased communication and collaboration with court, DCFS, Probation and community related to ICWA compliance.

Indian Child Welfare Task Force	To recruit American Indian resource family homes.	Establish a partnership between DCFS and the American Indian Community	American Indian Children's Council, the Native American Indian Commission	DCFS hired an American Indian Supervisor, established report with American Community, American Indian Orientation
Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN)	To improve the lives of abused, neglected and at-risk children through multidisciplinary efforts that support the identification, prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.	ICAN provides advocacy and leadership within Los Angeles County, as well as on a state and national basis, for improved policy development, provision of services, public awareness, education and training.	DCFS, County departments, and child welfare and health care agencies.	Support and advocacy of new legislation to increase services for children who are victims of abuse and neglect. Support and advocacy for preventive services and best practice protocol to reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect.
Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN)	To serve as the official county body to coordinate the multi-agency development of services for the prevention, identification, prosecution and treatment of child abuse and neglect. To improve the lives of children and families at-risk and those served by the Child Welfare and Protection systems through inter-disciplinary collaboration, program development, accountability and advocacy.	ICAN's activities are carried out through a variety of committees comprised of both public and private sector professionals with expertise in child abuse, which address critical issues affecting the well-being of the most vulnerable children including prenatally substance affected infants, pregnant and parenting adolescent, children exposed to family violence, abducted children, and siblings of children who are victims of fatal abuse. Non-profit ICAN Associates raises funds and public awareness for programs and issues identified by ICAN.	Thirty-two County, City, State and Federal agency heads are members of the ICAN Policy Committee, along with UCLA, five private sector members appointed by the Board of Supervisors and the Children's Planning Council. ICAN's Policy Committee is comprised of the heads of each of the member agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful sponsorship & passage of AB 1687, Brownley which allows greater sharing of information among county departments regarding children in the child protection system. • Development & implementation of countywide inter-agency child abuse protocols, including training for all county departments. • Development & publication of guidelines for the mentoring of foster youth; formation of partnerships with the Rotary and Lyons organizations to support mentoring efforts. • Production of Annual Reports: The State of Child Abuse in LA County; The ICAN Child Death Review Team Report; The Safely Surrendered Baby Law in LA County. • Two Annual ICAN Conferences: Nexus conference on violence within the home and the Conference on Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss .

Interagency Gang Task Force	IGTF has been charged with addressing the problem of gang violence in LA County by bringing together intervention, prevention, and suppression entities in order to communicate and coordinate anti-gang efforts.	A subcommittee of the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee.	DCFS, LAPD, LA County Sheriff, School Police, various city police personnel, and community-based organizations.	Improved collaboration between city, county and child welfare agencies and law enforcement. Increased number of children provided safe homes and stability after removal from gang, drug and criminal environments.
Katie A Oversight Committee	The Katie A Oversight Committee is responsible to ensure the Department's direction in following the Federal, State and County Court settlement agreement.	The Federal Court has appointed consultants to oversee the Settlement Agreement and work along with County Department managers in the delivery of mental health services to children in the child welfare system in Los Angeles County. These mental health services need to be delivered in the most appropriate and home life settings possible.	There are two primary consultants plus part-time advisors.	1) Significantly better collaboration between several different County Departments (DCFS, DMH, Probation, DHS and DPH); 2) Creation of the implementation plan, and corrective action plan; 3) Creation of specialized units within DCFS and DMH (D-rate); 4) Creation of medical hubs countywide; and 5) Co-location of mental health staff in child welfare offices.
LA SAVES	To work toward keeping communities safe by ensuring parole and probation compliance.	To improve the safety for the community and surrounding school districts.	DCFS, LA City Attorney, Parole, and Probation	Improved school attendance for DCFS and community children. Increased safety for children in route to and from school. Reduced incidences of violence on school campuses and in proximity to the local schools.
Lakewood Community Partners Meeting	To share information and services regarding children and families served by the Lakewood office.	Collaboration between DCFS and community service providers to share information and set goals.	Child Welfare related Service Providers, DCFS, Long Beach City Collage.	Bi-Annual Resource Fairs; Emancipation Fairs; Resource Directory; Improved Collaboration.
Lakewood Foster Parent Support Group	To provide a forum for Foster Parents to discuss issues and share successes.	DCFS - foster parents working together to identify system issues and solve work problems in regards to foster care.	Service area Foster Parents, DCFS.	*Newly formed (2007). Attendance of 50+ Foster Parents. Improved understanding of DCFS by foster parents.
Lakewood Office Parent Orientation	To provide parents with information and contacts to be able to understand and navigate the Child Welfare System.	Orientations for parents who are new to the Child Welfare system.	Any parent who is newly impacted by the Child Welfare system, DCFS.	*Newly formed (2007). 5+ classes for new parents.

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Liaison to Alliance for Children's Rights	Advocate for children and families and partner to provide best results for individual families and our collective clientele.	The Alliance raises questions and concerns regarding specific cases and participants discuss pros and cons to different solutions.	DCFS Deputy Director Amaryllis Watkins, Rose Belda of the Office of the County Counsel, DCFS Division Chief Teresa Arrevalo and Natasha Frost and Lara Holtzman of the Alliance.	Increased collaboration regarding case work and payment issues.
Linkages	Resources for public services and child support services and all other services offered through DPSS	Link services from DPSS & DCFS for Torrance office families	DPSS & DCFS	Link services for families serviced by the Torrance office.
Local Interagency Operations Network (LION)	Achievement of Wraparound/Systems of Care (SOC) outcomes for child and family participants through improved communications, community awareness and support, and partnerships with SPA councils assuring voice ownership, choice and access.	Provide a forum for ongoing communication between the community stakeholders, countywide departments, and agencies providing Wraparound/SOC services to improve knowledge and understanding of strength-based programs and ensure that local outcomes are achieved.	DCFS, DMH, Probation, SPA Council, Education, Courts, Wraparound/SOC Program, and a Parent, Youth, Business and Faith-based Representative.	Improved mental health services for children and family support. Increased quality of life for special needs children who have improved mental and behavioral outcomes due to intensive mental health treatment.
Long Beach SCAN Meeting	Improve collaboration and communication between Long Beach Memorial and local government agencies.	Problem solve, share information regarding issues affecting children and families with medical issues.	DCFS, Law Enforcement, School District, Long Beach Memorial Hospital staff.	Improved communication/collaboration, New hospital protocols for Hospital Holds.
Los Angeles Adoptions Initiative	To find adoptive homes for LA's Waiting Children.	A group dedicated to exploring new means of targeted and child-specific recruitment of perspective adoptive families.	Private/Public partnership spearheaded by Children's Action Network and involves local FFAs and DCFS.	Debut/launch of MARV (the Mobile Adoption Recruitment Vehicle), a revamped RV that promotes adoption and features information and media materials on some of LA's waiting children.

Los Angeles County Adoption Consortium	To enhance and improve the best practice in service delivery to adoptive families and children.	Meetings are bimonthly. Los Angeles County/Adoption & Permanency Resource Division collaborate with private adoption agencies and to share and discuss adoption practices and adoption regulations and recruitment efforts.	Los Angeles County/DCFS/ Adoption & Permanency Resource Division/ Post Adoption Services/ Adoption Promotion Support Services and adoption private agencies and County Counsel.	Community partners have an increased understanding of the Department's current and planned activities. The Department and community partners have an increased understanding of fellow partners' current and planned activities. Collaboration among consortium members has been either strengthened or created. Solutions to system issues have been identified and implemented that facilitate working together to support permanency. Resources have been pooled to support permanency for children.
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Multi-Faith Clergy Council	It is the liaison between the Sheriff, the clergy councils attached to each Sheriff's station, and other religious organizations. An ad hoc body of religious leaders who provide input, suggest various projects, and interact with the senior management of the Sheriff's Department, the Executive Clergy Council meets regularly as a forum and provides an opportunity for people to come together, communicate, and share their mutual concerns.	Meets with members on a quarterly basis. Discussing community problems and providing solutions.	Clergies throughout Los Angeles County, law enforcements, probation officers, social workers, community activists	Increased awareness of needs by faith partners and improved partnerships to better meet community needs
National Association of Adoption Program Managers	Enhance and improve upon the provision of public adoption services.	This group meets annually to share expertise, best practices and knowledge in the area of public adoption practice.	The Adoption Program Managers from all States are invited to attend this annual meeting. Since Los Angeles County is larger than most States, our County has been invited to participate as well.	Information regarding national trends in adoption, Adoption Promotion and Support Services, Adoption Assistance Payments, best practices in older youth adoptions, Interstate Compact have all been addressed at these meetings.

National Trauma Network	To counteract the negative effects of child abuse and neglect through the implementation of legislation and best practice protocol.	Federally funded program through SAMHSA that addresses the emotional effects of children who have suffered from abuse and neglect. The Network examines this issue through practice and policy.	DCFS, DMH and community-based mental health agencies.	Support and advocacy of new legislation to increase services for children who are victims of abuse and neglect. Support and advocacy for preventive services to reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect.
Norwood Healthy Start Collaborative	To ensure that children are safe and healthy and reach their educational milestones.	Seeking preventative services toward child abuse utilizing a community approach.	DCFS, CBO, Norwood School District, School Police, mental health agencies, etc.	Increased community involvement in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Increased parental involvement in the school system. Enhanced mental health services within the community.
Parent Partner Program	To empower parents to effectively assist and mentor other parents through the Child Welfare System.	Training and developing of parents to become partners/mentors for new parents in the system.	Parents who have successfully navigated system and want to help others, DCFS.	*Newly formed (2007). Training of 8 new parent partners.
Partners for a Better Palmdale	Support ongoing development and implementation of strategic plan to address needs of Palmdale community.	Group meets regularly to identify what is working and what areas need improvement in the community.	Public and private organizations in Palmdale as well as individual community members	Respond to community needs as they arise. As part of the Palmdale Neighbor House project, shared space for Team Decision Making meetings, DCFS community outreach.
Pasadena Project	Address the issue of increase homicides concerning youth in the Pasadena area. Identify areas of need and service gaps, establish new services/linkages that will aid in reducing violence among youth.	Create group who are knowledgeable in the area of services for youth and crime prevention. Conduct needs assessment and implement/create services to reduce violence in the Transitional Age Youth population.	DCFS, Probation, law enforcement, DMH, District Attorney, clergy and other community agencies.	Increased understanding of services needs to reduce violence and increased coordination of services
Project ABC Operations Committee	Through community education, advocacy, and system coordination, Project ABC aims to increase the professional capacity to provide relationship-based infant mental health services and improve access to and coordination of services provided.	Five year grant through the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Project focuses on the mental health needs of children from birth to five years.	DCFS, DMH, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) and CIL.	The ability to provide early identification of mental health needs for pre-school age children and initiate therapeutic behavioral services prior to school enrollment. Increased quality of life for special needs children who have improved mental and behavioral outcomes due to early mental health treatment.

Regional Task Force Meetings	Addressing the problem of gang violence in LA County by bringing together intervention, prevention, and suppression entities in order to communicate and coordinate anti-gang efforts.	Regional subcommittee meetings originating from the IGTF.	DCFS, LAPD, LA County Sheriff, School Police, various city police personnel, and community-based organizations.	Increased awareness and sensitivity to child abuse by law enforcement personnel. Increased knowledge of and availability to resources accessible to youth serviced by city and county agencies.
SAAC- Service Advisory Action Committee for SPA III	This committee coordinates community mental health services for SPA three.	This committee provides information regarding new mental health services. Facilitates access, eligibility to these services and provides education on mental health disorders for adults and youth; Allows agencies to network with mental health service providers specific to SPA III.	Monthly attendance and participation to meetings by a DCFS representative, Representatives from Community Service Providers, and Representatives from Department of Mental Health (DMH).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better coordination of mental health services to the families we serve this facilitates more rapid service provisions. • Able to communicate and distribute up-to-date information regarding new mental health services & programs (for example: prop 69) to Children & Families, DCFS staff & Community Partners.
San Fernando Coalition on Gangs	To collaborate with agencies and community to increase safety and reduce gang violence.	Independent committee to address gang violence and suppression in the San Fernando Valley.	DCFS, LAPD, City Council, Probation, CBO's, etc.	Increased awareness and sensitivity to child abuse by law enforcement personnel. Increased knowledge of and availability to resources accessible to youth serviced by city and county agencies. Reduced incidences of gang violence within the SFV community.
San Fernando Valley Community Advisory Council (CAC)	Linking DCFS families to much needed services as quickly as possible along with empowering the community to meet its needs.	The Departments of Social Services and Mental Health have also co-located staff in the DCFS San Fernando Valley Office to expedite linkage of DCFS families with vital services. The Council has also began to identify this community's unmet service needs in an effort to recommend long-term sustainable solutions through community empowerment.	The Departments of Social Services and Mental Health	6) Initiated process to further identify the community's unmet needs with the goal of recommending long-term sustainable solutions through community empowerment. The Council has also been in dialogue with our SPA's lead agency for the Prevention Initiative (Friends of the Family, a Council member) to determine how member agencies can best support this initiative.
South County Faith-Based Council	To meet the needs of the community through Faith-Based collaboration with DCFS.	Collaboration between DCFS and Faith-Based community to identify and meet the needs of the community.	Faith-Based agencies, DCFS, churches synagogues, etc.	*Newly formed (November 2007). Holiday Gift Drive 2007 (1000 gifts).

South County Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) Council	To Identify issues and share information that will enable Transitional Aged Youth to receive best possible services.	Problem solve, share information regarding issues effecting Transitional Aged Youth.	DCFS, DMH, City of Long Beach, TAY Providers.	Transitional Aged Youth Fair, Availability of Community Providers and 10-15 DCFS Emancipation Conferences per month.
Southern Area Trainers & Recruitment Network (SATRN)	To share methodologies on recruitment of foster and adoptive homes	To exchange ideas on the recruitment and retention of resource families	Recruitment specialist from DCFS, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange Counties	Implementation of recruitment ideas
Southern California Youth Permanency Collaboration	A collaboration to reach agreements on best practice related to various aspects of youth permanency work, such as: structure of the work; data collection and outcome measures; resource development; team and partnership building; training implementation and sustainability ; legal advocacy; legislation and policy, including implementation.	A collaborative between various public, private and non-profit agencies in both Los Angeles and Orange County focused on enhancing youth permanency practice for older foster youth.	Los Angeles and Orange County Child Protection Services; Los Angeles and Orange County CASA; California Permanency for Youth Project; Five Acres; Hollygrove; Canyon Acres	Newly formed collaborative Coordinated Training between counties.
SPA 3 Council and Steering Committee	A representative body of public and private organizations and individuals who collaborate in planning and coordinating services in a culturally sensitive manner to enhance the quality of life for children and families in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys.	The Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council brings together communities, government, nonprofits, and the private sector in a strategic collaborative effort to improve children's lives through a social change agenda. Service Planning Area 3 Council leads CPC's work in the San Gabriel Valley.	DPSS, DCFS, DMH, Probation, County Departments- Libraries, Parks and Recreation, etc., Conveners, Child Support Services, FFA's, Providers, parents, youth, Citrus College, and many other organization representatives.	1. Creating 6 Parent Action Network groups in the San Gabriel Valley. 2. Creating 3 Youth Action Networks groups in the San Gabriel Valley. 3. Providing 10 mini-grants to the community-e.g. HIV-STD testing/counseling to Mount SAC College-inspired /created by fraternity at M. SAC. 4. Major Health Fair for San Gabriel Valley-held at Arcadia Park. 5. Establishment of DIG-Demonstration Impact Grants-2 governmental agencies coming together to provide community services: Pomona Youth At Risk Summit & Pasadena Parents' Resource Center.

SPA 3 Council and Steering Committee	A representative body of public and private organizations and individuals who collaborate in planning and coordinating services in a culturally sensitive manner to enhance the quality of life for children and families in the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys.	The Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council brings together communities, government, nonprofits, and the private sector in a strategic collaborative effort to improve children's lives through a social change agenda. Service Planning Area 3 Council leads CPC's work in the San Gabriel Valley.	DPSS, DCFS, DMH, Probation, County Departments- Libraries, Parks and Recreation, etc., Conveners, Child Support Services, FFA's, Providers, parents, youth, Citrus College, and many other organization representatives.	1. Creating 6 Parent Action Network groups in the San Gabriel Valley. 2. Creating 3 Youth Action Networks groups in the San Gabriel Valley. 3. Providing 10 mini-grants to the community-e.g. HIV-STD testing/counseling to Mount SAC College-inspired /created by fraternity at M. SAC. 4. Major Health Fair for San Gabriel Valley-held at Arcadia Park. 5. Establishment of DIG-Demonstration Impact Grants-2 governmental agencies coming together to provide community services: Pomona Youth At Risk Summit & Pasadena Parents' Resource Center. 6. Youth Organizing Network Conferences-last one held at Kaiser on 10/31/07. Several others have been held-bringing together agencies who provide services for youth.
SPA 6 Wateridge Advisory Council	To provide an environment wherein the community stakeholders can make a positive contribution in the delivery of timely quality child welfare services by the Wateridge office to the children and families of our community.	Work to unite the community stakeholders impacted by the child welfare service system in order to develop community safety nets in the form of resources and programs designated to keep children in their own homes and communities.	DCFS, DMH, Wings of Refuge, United Care, Seeking Peaceful Solutions, SPA 6 Council, Dr. Harriet Williams/Commission for Children and Families, El Centro Del Pueblo, Shields for Families, Fred Jefferson, Teens Happy Homes, Drew CDC, Project Peacemakers, Community Colleges, Healthy African-American Families, Faithful Central Bible Church, IMHP, CII, EXCEL Family Solutions, HerShe, Southwest College, Child Alliance, Community Youth Sports, SCPIP, etc.	Served on the panel in the selection of the Deputy Director and Wateridge Regional Administrator. Reviewed and provided input on the Wateridge Permanency Plan. Trained on Point of Engagement. Hosted a meeting for Assembly Woman Karen Bass.
SPA 8 Local Interagency Operations Network (L.I.O.N.S.) Meetings	To identify and resolve issues that will make Wraparound/SOC Programs as effective/successful as possible.	Collaboration between DCFS/DMH and Wraparound/SOC providers to problem solve and improve process/services.	DCFS, DMH, Wraparound, Probation, Providers, SOC providers.	Facilitation of communication between DCFS/DMH with Wraparound providers.

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SPA 8 Steering Committee	To Identify Community needs and provide support to meet those needs.	Collaboration between SPA 8 community service providers to identify and meet needs to the community.	DCFS, DMH, DPSS, Lead Service Providers in SPA 8.	Bi-Annual School Readiness Conference, Granting of "Mini" grants, Community Garden, Work Placement Program with Conoco.
Specialized Acute Foster Home Environment (SAFE)	To recruit resource family homes for children with special medical needs	To adapt the construct of homes to qualify to care for children with special medical needs.	DCFS, Community Care Licensing, Rancho Los Amigos Hospital, Habitat for Humanity	Trained 100 individuals to become SAFE foster parents, 20 special medical needs children have new resource families
Sybil Brand Commission	Insure child safety in juvenile and residential facilities.	The Sybil Brand Commission is charged with conducting onsite inspections of Group Home (residential facilities) where LA County DCFS and Probation youth are placed.	DCFS Out of Home Care Management Division, Probation Department, Sheriff's Department, Auditor-Controller Program Audit Section, Department of Mental Health, CCL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved maintenance of Group Homes' physical plant. • Increased awareness of importance of emancipation and independent living planning in group homes. • Improved adherence to children's' personal rights who are in group home care.
Task Force To End Homophobia	To address issues of discriminatory treatment, harassment, and violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity that youth or caretakers may face, and promote safe, fair and appropriate placements and services.	A resource and training group as well as a advocacy and "watchdog" group to working on behalf of the LGBTQ youth and caretakers involved in Los Angeles County's dependency and probation systems.	Group includes juvenile court judges, attorneys, social workers, educators and activists.	conducted a workshop at the 11 annual A New Beginning for Partnerships for Children and Families in Los Angeles County conference and assisted with DCFS' participation in the nationwide All Children, All Families Initiative.
Transition Partners Committee	Create a full and comprehensive continuum of preparation and support for all 14-25 year olds transitioning from Foster Care in Hub B and SPA 3.	Meets with the members on a quarterly basis. Providing information regarding the different service providers and their up coming events benefiting Transitional Age Youth.	Service providers in the Pasadena area including, but not limited to, Mental Health providers, Education providers, Housing Authority of the city of Pasadena, DCFS, Probation, Casey, Transitional Homes, PCC, Cal State Universities, Financial Aid, Equal Opportunity Program, and Job Corps.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased outreach re. available services to transitioning youth 2. Increased access to services

W.L.A. Faith Based Partner Permanency Initiative	To help find secure, loving, foster and adoptive homes for our foster children and to support them in various other ways.	The West Los Angeles DCFS Office, APRD PRU, the Foster Care Recruitment Section and the DCFS Mentoring Section are partnering to reach out to the SPA 5 Faith Based Community to (1) Recruit Local "Resource Families", (2) Recruit Local Mentors, and (3) Recruit Faith Organizations who will "Adopt A Social Worker's Caseload".	Membership is comprised of over 2 dozen volunteer staff from the WLA DCFS Office (from the Regional Administrator, to Social Workers, to Clerical Support Staff) in partnership with representatives from Adoption PRU, Foster Care Recruitment and Mentoring, as well as over 2 dozen Faith Based Community Leaders.	(1) A "Covenant Book" was published and 14 of 15 waiting children featured from SPA 5 have found legal permanence; (2) Sponsored successful Launching Event--Faith Based Partner & Community Caregiver Symposium; (3) Follow up event at St. Monica's Church--resulting in Church bulletin and website featuring our waiting children, as well as 18 member Resource Family Orientation; (4) Follow up event at Beth Shir Sholom--resulting in partnership to "Adopt A Social Worker Caseload"; (5) Monthly Faith Based Partner Steering Committee, which established 3 committees.
Wateridge Advisory Council Teens Workgroup	Work to unite the community stakeholders impacted by the child welfare service system in order to develop community safety nets in the form of resources and programs designated to keep children in their own homes and communities.	The workgroup addresses issues regarding any aspect that will assist the teen population in becoming informed and securing available services and resources.	DCFS (Wateridge, Emancipation, HSA, P3, Educational Liaison and PHN) partners with LA On The Move, Faithful Central Bible Church, Wings of Refuge, Seeking Peaceful Solutions, etc.	Improved outcomes for teens in the area of school attendance, graduation rates, and community peer involvement.
Women's Re-Entry Meeting	Preparation, support and services for incarcerated women returning into the community.	Addressing women's re-entry from prison into society to prevent recidivism and increase successful reunification.	DCFS, CCJCC, and BOS	Fairly new program and therefore too early to provide outcomes.
Yes to Kids	Provide information to the community related to child abuse prevention	Coordinates community activities to disseminate child abuse prevention information.	DCFS and community agencies, even those not traditionally connected to children and families such as business that may assist with outreach efforts and fund raising.	Raise awareness regarding child abuse and prevention, engaging schools, families, etc. Participate in resource fairs. Coordinate poster contest each year. Recognize social workers for outstanding performance.

Contributors to the L.A. County Self-Assessment Report

Thank you to the following staff of the Department of Children and Family Services and the Probation Department, as well as our community stakeholders for the time, energy and contributions that you provided during the L.A. County Self-Assessment process. The work and thought that all of you so generously gave is deeply appreciated.

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